

Health and Wellness Centre

*Student Counselling
and Development*

*Kovsie Health Services
and HIV Office*

ANNUAL REPORT
2025



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*Inspiring excellence, transforming lives
through quality, impact, and care.*



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Change is the law of
life. And those who
look only to the **past**
or **present** are certain
to miss the **future**.*

JOHN F. KENNEDY



The year 2025 was a groundbreaking year in which Student Counselling and Development (SCD) merged with Kopsie Health Services (KHS) to become part of the Centre for Health and Wellness (HWC). The merger took place on 1 October 2024, but 2025 was the year of learning and collaboration as a centre established on a new foundation. Thank you to every HWC staff member for your patience, for embracing change, and for your enthusiasm in seizing new opportunities.

The 2025 annual report reflects the student-centred and multifaceted role that HWC plays across the three campuses of the University of the Free State. The centre fulfils not only a curative role but also a preventative one. This is evident in the number of students who attended workshops (11 012), programmes and groups (572), training sessions (161), as well as dialogues and awareness campaigns (1 239). A highlight of 2025 was the Men's Imbizo on the Qwaqwa Campus, attended by 317 male students, where challenging topics such as financial literacy, mental health, and safety were discussed. The Global Summit on Student Well-being, held in July, was the result of a collaborative effort between the HIV Office and the Social Support Office. The theme was *Co-creating Student Well-being Strategies*, and the event brought together representatives from more than 20 higher education institutions from across South Africa and the African continent. The number of students who made use of the services at the Health and Wellness Centre during 2025 is significant and highlights the core of the centre's role.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to HWC's journey of integration, success, and growth over the past year. A sincere thank you to Dr Temba Hlasho (Executive Director: Division of Student Affairs, Sport, Arts and Culture), the Student Affairs Senior Leadership Group (DSA-SAC SLG), and every HWC staff member. As Mother Teresa rightly said – *together we can do great things*. Thank you for the endless conversations, brainstorming sessions, and the opportunity to share a laugh over a cup of coffee – it remains a team effort!

INTRODUCTION

Student Counselling and Development

The Department of Student Counselling and Development (SCD) was established in 1977 and offers free services to all registered students at the University of the Free State (UFS). SCD is based within the Division of Student Affairs, Sport, Arts and Culture (DSA-SAC) and there are SCD offices on the Qwaqwa, South, and Bloemfontein Campuses. The staff complement consists of social workers, intern social workers, clinical and counselling psychologists, intern counselling psychologists, registered counsellors, and administrative staff.

Both undergraduate and postgraduate students can be assisted through a variety of services offered at SCD, including individual therapy sessions, group sessions, workshops, developmental programmes, and career counselling. Various age groups are attended to, ranging from adolescence to adulthood. The students assisted at SCD are from various cultural backgrounds across South Africa, as well as international students. SCD's strategic direction is based on three pillars, namely Psychological Interventions, Training and Development, and Research and Innovation. This process encapsulates the vision and mission of SCD, which – after several consultations with the entire team – has been adjusted to the following.

SCD's mission is to

- a improve understanding and awareness among the UFS community regarding holistic mental health and mental health challenges;
- b provide systemic education and knowledge regarding mental health issues and implement programmes, activities, and initiatives that support healing and the development of resilience among students;
- c contribute significantly to knowledge production, evidence-based interventions, and mental health innovations to address the substantial mental health needs of students; and
- d collaboratively create a socially just environment by expanding mental health services to enhance compassionate and caring environments for students.

The mission culminates in SCD's vision:

Our vision is to develop and implement systemic and holistic mental health services that promote student well-being and flourishing; mitigate, reduce, and prevent mental health challenges; and address existing mental health issues.

Kovsie Health Services and HIV

The Bureau for Student Counselling and Wellness was established in January 1977. Kovsie Health was then known as Student Health, and the doctor who assisted students was Dr Van Velden, who retired in 1982/1983. Dr Adri Prinsloo took over in 1983 as the doctor assisting students. Initially, these services were offered at no charge to students. Please note that the HIV office was not yet part of Student Health; it was incorporated a bit later.

In 1996, the team at Student Health consisted of two doctors assisting students, a professional nurse, a social worker, a receptionist and a messenger. Physiotherapy students could complete their practical module for Sport at Student Health under the supervision of a lecturer. The name was then changed to Kovsie Health, and in the late 1990s, the doctors' practice was changed to a private practice model, and these medical services were no longer offered free of charge.

From 2010, additional professional nurses were appointed to assist with the growing number of students who needed services. In 2016, a primary healthcare clinic was established; students without medical insurance could consult with professional nurses, while staff members were seen by doctors. In the late 2000s, the reception area was renovated twice to create more space for consultation rooms and to make the area accessible and wheelchair friendly. In 2024, the Kovsie Health Building on the Bloemfontein Campus was expanded to accommodate more consultation rooms.

In 2006, the Primary Health Care clinic on the Qwaqwa Campus was opened, with Sr MA Moloi (who retired

at the end of 2024) as the first professional nurse appointed. The clinic started with a reception area and a consultation room in the library building. In 2014, a new clinic was built to allow more professional nurses to render services to the student community. The South Campus clinic was launched in August 2021, initially with a professional nurse rendering services twice a week. Due to its popularity, the clinic was expanded to provide more space and better accommodate students. A permanent professional nurse was then appointed to assist the students on the South Campus.

KHS's mission is to

- a provide accessible, supportive, preventative, curative, and rehabilitative health care; and
- b promote holistic approaches to the well-being of our patients and clients.

On 1 October 2024, SCD integrated with Kovsie Health Services and the HIV Office. The newly conceptualised structure is known as the Health and Wellness Centre. The centre's journey throughout 2025 will be shared according to the three strategic pillars of SCD and their integrated activities.

The mission culminates in KHS's vision:

To strive to be a leading campus health care facility for those we serve.

Student Counselling and Development

1. PILLAR ONE: CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS

1.1 Services and interventions

Psychological Services Interventions

1.1.1 Individual Counselling

Individual, confidential counselling on various psychological, emotional, and developmental issues, with the aim of supporting students in resolving challenges that may impede the fulfilment of their potential. Individual sessions are held with students on an appointment basis. Although SCD has moved to mainly face-to-face sessions, students may still choose which platform of counselling they prefer:



Telephonic counselling



Online video counselling



Face-to-face counselling

While students are on campus, the majority prefer face-to-face sessions. During holiday periods, students will mostly revert to telephonic counselling. This, however, tends to have its own challenges, as privacy is a concern.

The tables below illustrate the number of sessions per campus during 2025.

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	46	278	541	501	641	519	558	716	759	933	738	110	6340
Total sessions attended	40	214	371	303	422	303	354	480	486	563	484	70	4090
Difference	6	64	170	198	219	216	204	236	273	370	254	40	2250
Cancelled by student	0	18	35	44	81	77	82	82	70	129	82	7	707
Cancelled (other)	0	15	28	25	27	27	16	43	44	32	24	7	288
Missed by students	6	29	105	123	128	125	103	104	163	181	145	26	1238
Total	6	62	168	192	236	229	201	229	277	342	251	40	2233
New students booked	29	140	276	142	201	114	131	133	113	146	88	8	1521
New students attended	21	120	206	98	157	82	98	115	81	100	64	8	1150

Table 1: Individual sessions on the Bloemfontein Campus

South Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	2	16	48	81	68	38	18	69	55	66	24	1	486
Total sessions attended	2	14	38	64	48	21	11	44	30	52	23	0	347
Difference	0	2	10	17	20	17	7	25	25	14	1	1	139
Cancelled by student	0	0	0	3	2	1	2	2	5	2	1	1	19
Cancelled (other)	0	2	0	3	6	4	0	8	9	1	0	0	33
Missed by students	0	2	10	11	12	12	5	15	11	11	0	0	89
Total	0	4	10	17	20	17	7	25	25	14	1	1	141
New students booked	1	16	25	24	14	11	4	6	10	7	0	0	118
New students attended	1	14	23	22	13	8	2	2	4	3	0	0	92

Table 2: Individual sessions on the South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	12	82	240	144	192	113	23	194	233	160	56	1	1450
Total sessions attended	11	72	161	70	137	74	13	143	156	61	39	1	938
Difference	1	10	79	74	55	39	10	51	77	99	17	0	512
Cancelled by student	1	1	26	31	21	9	3	17	12	17	5	0	143
Cancelled (other)	0	0	36	21	10	5	5	2	23	55	3	0	160
Missed by students	1	9	29	21	24	32	4	26	42	33	8	0	229
Total	2	10	91	73	55	46	12	45	77	105	16	0	532
New students booked	11	62	151	43	54	33	14	70	51	42	11	0	542
New students attended	10	57	108	31	41	22	6	56	39	17	9	0	396

Table 3: Individual sessions on the Qwaqwa Campus

The next table indicates the total sessions across all campuses for 2025, emphasising that 1 556 sessions were missed by students. This is calculated at 19% of the total booked sessions – the same percentage as in 2023 and 2024, which is still too high.

All 3 campuses	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	60	376	829	726	901	670	599	979	1047	1159	818	112	8 276
Total sessions attended	53	300	570	437	607	398	378	667	672	676	546	71	5 375
Difference	7	76	259	289	294	272	221	312	375	483	272	41	2 901
Cancelled by student	1	19	61	78	104	87	87	101	87	148	88	8	869
Cancelled (other)	0	17	64	49	43	36	21	53	76	88	27	7	481
Missed by students	7	40	144	155	164	169	112	145	216	225	153	26	1 556
Total	8	76	269	282	311	292	220	299	379	461	268	41	2 906
New students booked	41	218	452	209	269	158	149	209	174	195	99	8	2 181
New students attended	32	191	337	151	211	112	106	173	124	120	73	8	1 638

Table 4: Individual sessions for all three campuses

Feedback from students regarding individual counselling

- The MHP's direct, honest, and insightful approach helped me recognise personal strengths, better understand others, and respond more effectively to challenging situations.
- The psychologist's calm presence and ability to offer new perspectives helped me gain clarity and manage anxiety more effectively.
- The appointment reminder calls were appreciated. I left my sessions feeling positive and equipped with practical strategies.
- The MHP created a safe and supportive environment where I can feel comfortable, heard, and understood.
- I valued having my feelings and experiences validated and wish I could have gone for more frequent sessions.
- The psychologist helped me to develop greater self-awareness and focus on what I can control in order to become a better version of myself.



1.1.2 On call / emergency sessions

Daily time slots to assist with emergency-related issues (suicide attempts; suicidal thoughts; trauma) are booked to ensure that students receive timely intervention. Individual appointments are set aside for emergency sessions to assess and contain the emergency and make the relevant referrals. The table below illustrates the number of emergency sessions per campus during 2025.

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	6	14	33	34	31	20	31	37	35	31	17	1	290
On call (emergency) attended	3	12	28	24	24	12	25	32	28	21	11	1	221

Table 5: On-call sessions: Bloemfontein Campus

South Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	0	1	3	1	6	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	17
On call (emergency) attended	0	1	3	1	6	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	17

Table 6: On-call sessions: South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	2	2	5	2	1	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	20
On call (emergency) attended	2	2	4	2	1	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	19

Table 7: On-call sessions: Qwaqwa Campus

The next table indicates the total sessions for 2025, highlighting that 70 sessions were missed by students across the three campuses. This is calculated at 21% of the total booked sessions, which is substantial.

All 3 campuses	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	9	17	41	37	38	22	33	45	36	31	17	1	327
On call (emergency) attended	6	15	35	27	31	14	27	40	29	21	11	1	257

Table 8: On-call sessions: All three campuses

Data indicates that the months of March, April, and May in the first semester, and July, August, September, October, and November in the second semester, had significantly more students requesting therapeutic assistance and emergency sessions. The significant increase in requests during the first semester (March and April) has not been the norm at SCD, but this is the third year this pattern has emerged. It is worthwhile noting that ad hoc staff had to be appointed from February 2025 to assist with service delivery, as demand was exceptionally high. Usually, these staff members are appointed from March. The second semester's increase in requests during August, October, and November relates to past experience. During 2024 and 2025, requests increased from the beginning of the second semester, whereas they usually tended to only increase from August. Seemingly, students need specialised help sooner than in the past. It does therefore seem that the peak periods for students needing services are escalating.

The top 10 reasons why students report to SCD can be seen in the tables below.

TOP 10 REASONS WHY STUDENTS VISIT SCD												
	January		February		March		April		May		June	
1	Anxiety	31	Anxiety	172	Overthinking	180	Overthinking	103	Anxiety	91	Overthinking	33
2	Overthinking	27	Overthinking	164	Anxiety	169	Anxiety	96	Overthinking	86	Anxiety	29
3	Family	21	Family	120	Family	138	Academic performance	79	Academic performance	68	Depression	22
4	Depression	20	Depression	112	Suicidal plan/attempt	118	Family	72	Depression	61	Academic performance	19
5	Panic attacks	17	Stress	102	Stress	111	Depression	59	Suicidal plan/attempt	50	Suicidal plan/attempt	15
6	Academic performance	17	Eat/sleep	80	Depression	103	Eat/sleep	59	Stress	49	Eat/sleep	15
7	Stress	16	Panic attacks	77	Panic attacks	97	Panic attacks	55	Family	49	Family	13
8	Financial	16	Academic performance	77	Eat/sleep	94	Stress	54	Panic attacks	46	Poor self-esteem	13
9	Suicidal plan/attempt	15	Self-esteem	73	Academic performance	91	Suicidal plan/attempt	47	Eat/sleep	41	Romantic relationships	13
10	Eat/sleep	13	Suicidal plan/attempt	72	Self-esteem	88	Poor self-esteem	42	Poor self-esteem	39	Stress	12

	July		August		September		October		November		December	
1	Overthinking	81	Overthinking	111	Overthinking	91	Overthinking	76	Overthinking	63	Depression	2
2	Anxiety	78	Anxiety	94	Anxiety	79	Anxiety	65	Anxiety	52	Financial concerns	2
3	Academic performance	53	Family related	76	Academic performance	61	Academic performance	62	Depression	50	Overthinking	1
4	Suicidal	51	Academic performance	69	Suicidal	58	Depression	54	Family related	41	Anxiety	1
5	Stress	47	Suicidal	65	Depression	56	Suicidal	48	Academic performance	37	Anger	1
6	Depression	46	Stress	65	Family related	49	Family related	48	Suicidal	36	Stress	1
7	Panic attacks	44	Depression	60	Eat/sleep	48	Stress	44	Anger	30	Family related	1
8	Family related	42	Eat/sleep	60	Panic attacks	45	Eat/sleep	35	Eat/sleep	27	Panic attacks	1
9	Self-esteem	39	Self-esteem	49	Stress	41	Self-esteem	33	Stress	27	Academic performance	1
	Eat/sleep	35	Panic attacks	46	Self-esteem	41	Anger	31	Self-esteem	25	Self-esteem	1

Table 9: Top 10 reasons why students visit SCD (monthly)

The top ten reasons for students visiting SCD during 2025 are summarised in the table below. The top three reasons, Overthinking (*this involves thinking excessively about a certain topic or situation, analysing it for long periods of time*), Anxiety (*a feeling of nervousness, unease, or worry that typically occurs in the absence of an imminent threat*), and Family-related matters (*the extent to which a student is influenced by their family system*) are significantly higher than the rest of the reasons.



1	Overthinking	1016	6	Suicidal thoughts/plans/attempt	575
2	Anxiety	957	7	Stress-related matters	569
3	Family-related matters	670	8	Eat/sleep	507
4	Depression	645	9	Poor self-esteem	443
5	Academic performance	635	10	Panic attacks	428

Table 10: Top 10 reasons why students visit SCD (total for the year)

1.1.3 Career Counselling

This specialised process assists the student in knowing and understanding themselves and the world of work in order to make career, educational, and life decisions. The career counselling process offered to registered students and Grade 11/12 learners includes a complete psychometric evaluation of aptitude, interests, and personality, as well as an intake interview and intensive decision-making process with a counselling psychologist.

The following tables provide an illustration of the number of career counselling processes on each campus, with the figures being consolidated in the last table.

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	2	3	7	8	10	14	38	13	14	20	4	3	136
Intake interviews attended	2	2	5	6	9	9	32	7	10	11	3	3	99
Feedback sessions booked	0	1	2	5	1	5	9	15	7	11	16	5	77
Feedback sessions attended	0	1	1	4	1	1	6	11	6	7	12	5	55

Table 11: Career Counselling sessions: South Campus

South Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	1	0	0	8
Intake interviews attended	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	6
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3

Table 12: Career Counselling sessions: South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Intake interviews attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3

Table 13: Career Counselling sessions: Qwaqwa Campus

Career Counselling	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	2	3	7	8	10	15	39	17	18	21	4	3	147
Intake interviews attended	2	2	5	6	9	10	33	11	13	11	3	3	108
Feedback sessions booked	0	1	2	5	1	5	10	18	10	11	16	5	84
Feedback sessions attended	0	1	1	4	1	1	6	14	7	9	12	5	61

Table 14: Career Counselling sessions: All three campuses

Social Work Services Interventions

Social Work Services aim to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance student success and well-being. This is done by planning and implementing appropriate social support intervention strategies and techniques. Some of these interventions include the following:



Family-related matters (e.g. divorce, death, etc.)



Sexual gender-based violence intervention and referrals (SGBV)



Food support (referrals to the Food Bank and No Student Hungry programmes)



Emergency social support needs assessments



Bereavement support



Pregnancy counselling



Substance abuse support and referrals.

A reflection of students seen by Social Work Services can be seen in the table below.

1.1.4 Individual Counselling

Type of service	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	5	26	66	51	75	45	49	138	93	77	51	8	684
Total sessions attended	0	18	57	36	53	30	33	105	61	51	32	8	484
Difference	5	8	9	15	22	15	16	33	32	26	19	0	200
Cancelled by student	0	1	0	4	3	8	3	13	11	7	5	0	55
Cancelled (other)	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	9
Missed by students	0	7	8	7	19	4	9	15	23	19	13	0	124
Total	0	8	11	12	22	12	12	33	34	26	18	0	188
New students booked	4	22	46	33	16	11	19	35	18	40	14	2	260
New students attended	4	22	41	21	14	11	18	33	16	31	13	2	226
On call booked	0	0	2	2	3	5	3	3	4	4	4	0	30
On call attended	0	0	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	0	21
Intake booked	4	22	46	33	75	30	2	15	11	37	14	2	291
Intake attended	4	22	41	21	53	19	0	14	10	29	13	2	228

Table 15: Individual Sessions: Bloemfontein Campus

Among others, substance abuse continues to be a common trend, with high prevalence rates and serious consequences for students' academic performance, mental health, and financial sustainability. It has been found that the prevalence of financial strain is also due to the easy access to online gambling sites. Measures to prevent access to these sites will be explored with assistance from Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and financial aid departments as students use their NSFAS allowances for online gambling. A systemic intervention is needed.

Type of service	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	0	2	13	21	35	0	5	56	68	60	21	0	281
Total sessions attended	0	6	8	19	27	0	5	38	42	35	11	0	191
Difference	0	-4	5	2	8	0	0	18	26	26	10	0	91
Cancelled by student	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	18	4	6	3	0	33
Cancelled (other)	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	18	12	2	1	0	36
Missed by students	0	0	1	1	8	0	0	18	12	13	7	0	60
Total	0	0	1	5	9	0	0	54	28	21	11	0	129
New students booked	0	1	6	11	20	0	3	23	16	10	2	0	92
New students attended	0	1	6	4	20	0	3	26	16	7	2	1	86
On call booked	0	0	2	1	6	0	0	8	8	11	2	1	39
On call attended	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	4	2	1	15
Intake booked	4	2	6	11	20	0	3	23	16	10	2	1	98
Intake attended	4	3	6	7	20	0	3	23	16	7	3	1	93

Table 16: Individual Sessions: South Campus

On the South Campus, the number of cases of pregnant students was significant. The positive relationship with the Pregnancy Crisis Centre of Hope proved to be pivotal. A total of eight babies (seven boys and one girl) were born this year, and the mothers received psychosocial and physical support services from the social worker and the Pregnancy Crisis Centre. Furthermore, none of the children had to be placed in alternative care, and their mothers continued with their studies in 2025.

Type of service	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	33	60	82	23	112	34	14	50	54	56	45	1	564
Total sessions attended	33	60	79	23	102	33	13	47	48	42	42	1	523
Difference	0	0	9	0	10	1	1	3	6	14	3	0	47
Cancelled by student	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	9
Cancelled (other)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missed by students	0	0	0	0	10	1	1	3	6	5	3	0	29
Total	0	0	0	0	10	1	1	3	6	11	3	0	35
New students booked	33	57	75	20	72	34	10	29	32	33	22	0	417
New students attended	33	57	75	20	62	33	9	32	27	25	20	0	393
On call booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4
On call attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4
Intake booked	33	57	75	20	62	33	9	29	32	33	22	0	405
Intake attended	33	57	75	20	62	33	9	29	27	25	20	0	390

Table 17: Individual Sessions: Qwaqwa Campus

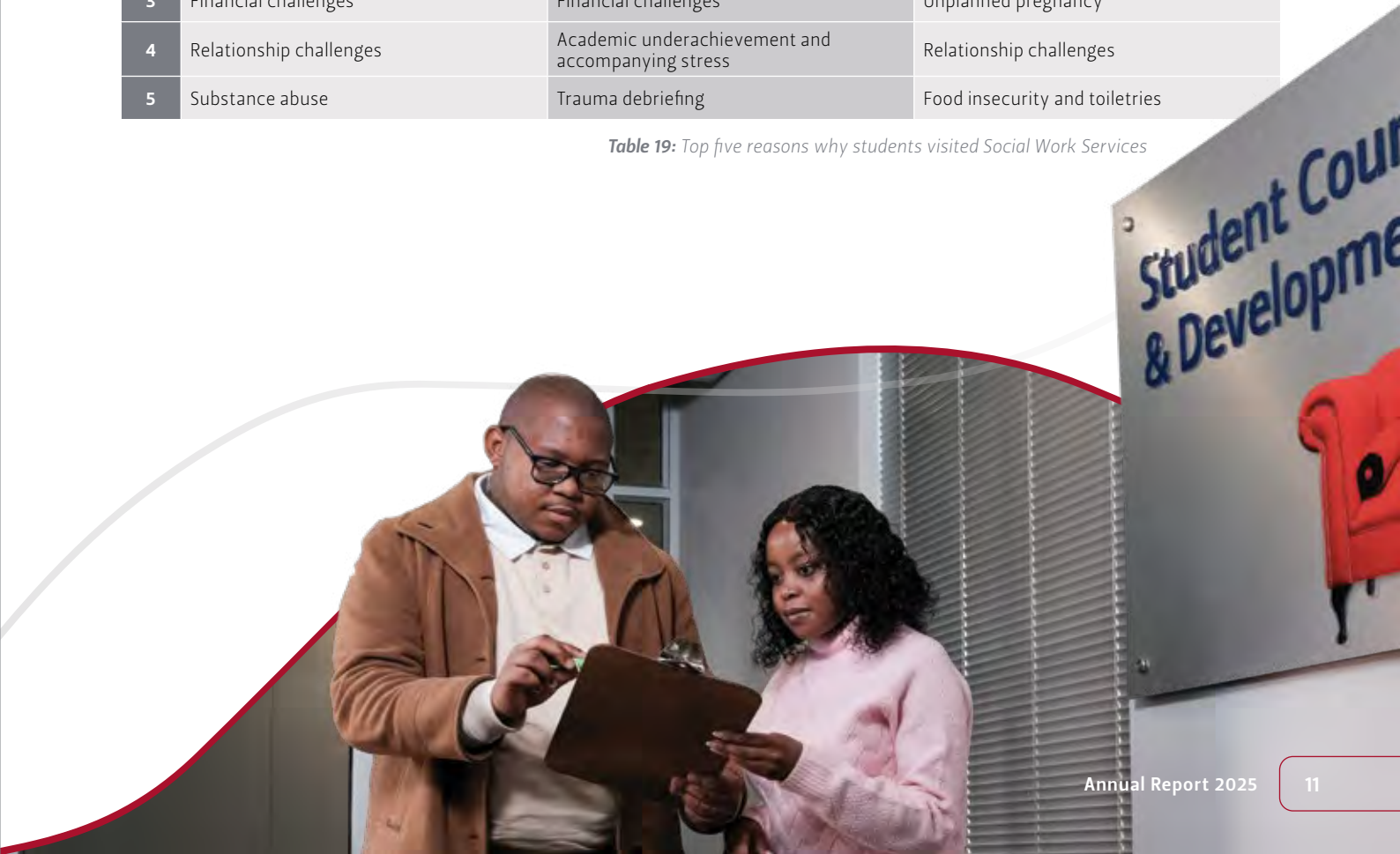
Social Work Services	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	38	88	161	95	222	79	68	244	182	171	117	9	1 474
Total sessions attended	33	84	144	78	182	63	51	190	128	117	85	9	1 164
Difference	5	4	17	17	40	16	17	54	54	54	32	0	310
Cancelled by student	0	1	0	6	3	8	3	31	13	19	8	0	92
Cancelled (other)	0	0	3	3	1	0	0	23	6	0	1	0	37
Missed by students	0	7	9	8	37	5	10	36	34	31	23	0	200
Total	0	8	12	17	41	13	13	90	53	50	32	0	329
New students booked	37	80	127	64	108	54	32	87	56	83	38	2	759
New students attended	37	80	122	45	96	44	30	91	49	63	35	3	695
On call booked	0	0	4	3	9	5	3	11	12	18	7	1	73
On call attended	0	0	3	3	5	3	3	4	4	10	4	1	40
Intake booked	37	81	127	64	157	63	14	67	49	80	38	3	780
Intake attended	37	82	122	48	135	52	12	66	43	61	23	3	698

Table 18: Individual Sessions: All three Campuses

The integration of Social Work Services into the service offering of SCD not only enhanced the multidisciplinary focus of the department but also allowed for a better understanding and collaboration between the disciplines. The top five reasons why students accessed Social Work Services can be viewed in the table below.

TOP FIVE REASONS FOR STUDENTS VISITING SCD: SOCIAL WORK SERVICES			
	Bloemfontein Campus	Qwaqwa Campus	South Campus
1	Grief	Psychosocial challenges	Childhood trauma and effects on current coping ability
2	Unplanned pregnancy	Food insecurity and toiletries	Academic underachievement and accompanying stress
3	Financial challenges	Financial challenges	Unplanned pregnancy
4	Relationship challenges	Academic underachievement and accompanying stress	Relationship challenges
5	Substance abuse	Trauma debriefing	Food insecurity and toiletries

Table 19: Top five reasons why students visited Social Work Services



1.1.5 On call/emergency sessions

Daily time slots to assist with emergency-related issues are booked to ensure that students receive a timely intervention. Emergency-related matters booked with the SCD social workers remain within the scope of their profession. Individual appointments are set aside for emergency sessions to assess and contain the emergency and make the relevant referrals. The table below illustrates the number of emergency sessions per campus during 2025.

On call/emergencies	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call booked	0	0	2	2	3	5	3	3	4	4	4	0	30
On call attended	0	0	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	0	21
Intake booked	4	22	46	33	75	30	2	15	11	37	14	2	291
Intake attended	4	22	41	21	53	19	0	14	10	29	13	2	228

Table 20: On call sessions: Bloemfontein Campus

On call/emergencies	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call booked	0	0	2	1	6	0	0	8	8	11	2	1	39
On call attended	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	4	2	1	15
Intake booked	4	2	6	11	20	0	3	23	16	10	2	1	98
Intake attended	4	3	6	7	20	0	3	23	16	7	3	1	93

Table 21: On call sessions: South Campus

On call/emergencies	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4
On call attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4
Intake booked	33	57	75	20	62	33	9	29	32	33	22	0	405
Intake attended	33	57	75	20	62	33	9	29	27	25	20	0	390

Table 22: On call sessions: Qwaqwa Campus

The next table indicates the total emergency sessions for 2025, highlighting that 33 sessions were missed by students across the three campuses. This is calculated at 45% of the total booked sessions, which is alarmingly high.

On call/emergencies	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call booked	0	0	4	3	9	5	3	11	12	18	7	1	73
On call attended	0	0	3	3	5	3	3	4	4	10	4	1	40
Intake booked	37	81	127	64	157	63	14	67	49	80	38	3	780
Intake attended	37	82	122	48	135	52	12	66	43	61	23	3	698

Table 23: On call sessions: All three Campuses

Spiritual Support Interventions

1.1.6 Individual Counselling

In 2024, SCD identified a need for the appointment of a spiritual support practitioner on an ad hoc basis (10 hours a week). The function of the spiritual support practitioner was primarily envisioned to provide support, psychoeducation and spiritual mediation to spiritually inclined students. Victoria Dithebe Gogo Zanemvula (*Gogo Zanemvula*) is fulfilling this role at SCD.

Gogo Zanemvula addressed the delegates at the South African Association of Campus Health Services (SAACHS) Conference hosted on 9 January 2025 in Bloemfontein. The talk focused on educating the mental health practitioners in the audience about the foundations of African indigenous systems and the parallels between them and other belief systems. The session concluded with an engaging and interactive question-and-answer period, during which health practitioners sought clarity on the signs and symptoms to observe when diagnosing spiritually inclined students.

As Gogo Zanemvula is based at SCD, Bloemfontein Campus, students of Bloemfontein and South Campuses could be assisted in person. Virtual consultations with students from the Qwaqwa Campus were implemented. The sessions consisted of spiritual mediation and support. During 2025, a total of 35 women students and 9 male students were assisted. The number of sessions was 84 with an average of 4 sessions per student.

1.2 Resources/Presentations

Psychological Services

1.2.1 Webinars/Workshops/Programmes/Presentations

Workshops

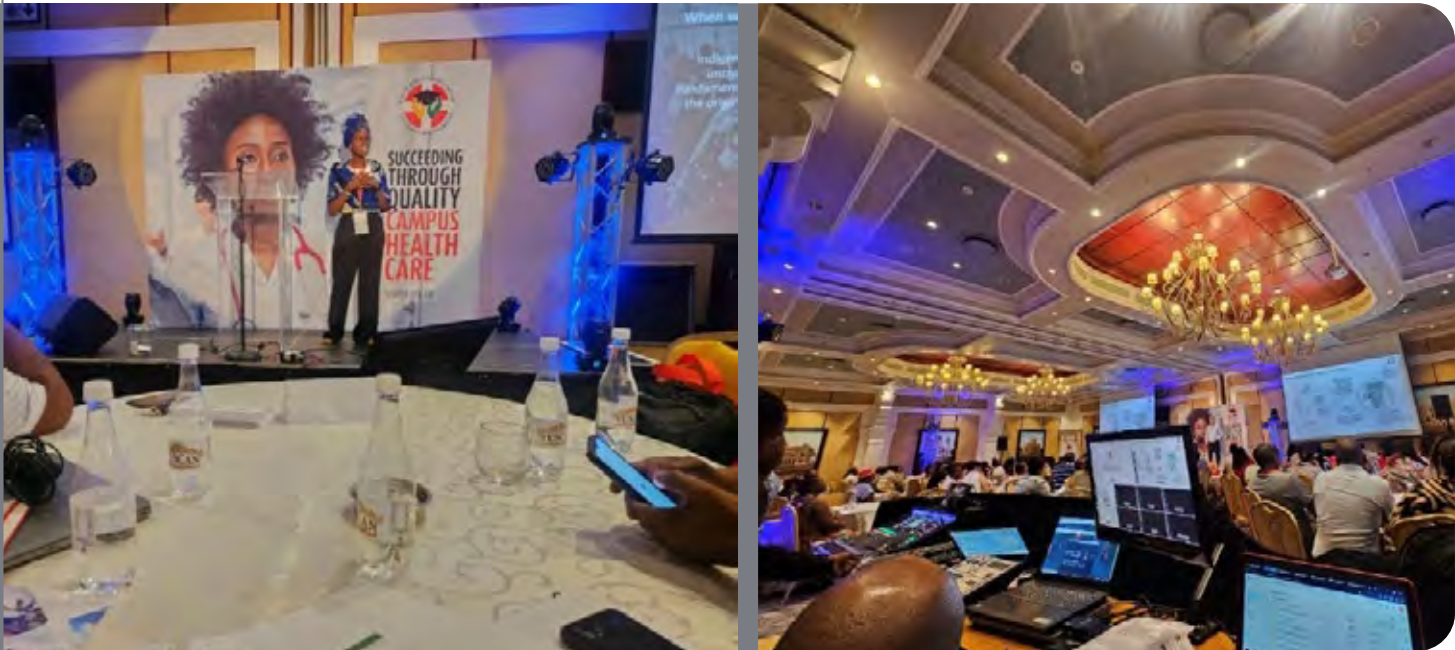
Group sessions are presented with the purpose of imparting skills and supporting students in resolving challenges that may impede the realisation of their potential. The various group sessions are presented in-house and at the request of UFS faculties, departments, and residences. SCD presented 142 workshops/webinars during the year, reaching 11 012 students. These workshops included:

- Coping with Stress
 - Mental Health Survival Guide
 - Suicide Awareness
 - Test and Exam Anxiety
- Self-Care
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Assertive Communication in Romantic Relationships, etc.

The most requested workshops were Coping with Stress, Suicide Awareness, Mental Health Survival Guide, and Self-Care. The tables below provide an overview of all group interventions presented during 2025.

Workshops		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Workshops	Booked	14	17	20	24	22	1	12	19	9	4	0	0	142
	Attended	685	2 381	2 330	1 661	1 527	40	927	1 056	219	186	0	0	11 012
REBT Programme	Booked	206						135						341
	Attended	12						79						91
Self-Esteem Programme 8 weeks, 1 per semester	Signed up	30						38						68
	Completed	15						27						42
DBT Skills Group	Signed up							8						8
	Completed							6						6
GROW Programme	Booked	106						17						123
	Attended	21						9						30
PASS	Activities	131 students reached												403
	Workshop attendance	272 students reached												

Table 24: Attendance of workshops and programmes



The previous table indicates the group interventions on all three campuses during 2025; a total of 11 584 individuals participated in group interventions. This impressive number showcases the vast amount of preventative work being done by SCD!

Feedback from students regarding Workshops

- Amazing session. All students need it.
- Attending this event helped me a lot such as coping with stress and adjust to university, and how you must behave as a person in order to have a good relationship with others.
- Had a fruitful workshop, beneficial and all the information I got, will help access the support I need such as coping with stress, eating healthy and exercising to boost my mental health.
- I am going to teach my friends about what i have learned
- I don't usually answer question during lectures, but today I felt seen and I was less scared to answer questions, and this session gave me a little confidence for upcoming lectures.
- I have gained a lot from this workshop, thank you.
- It is good to know how to train your brain.
- It was a great eye-opening session, I learnt a lot about myself and my partner
- I would like to thank the speaker for the fruitful insight on suicide awareness. I would love to help those that have suicidal thoughts in order to save more lives in this world.



Programmes

The *Self-Esteem programme* is an eight-week programme that focuses on developing healthy self-esteem in students. Students are assisted to define and understand the formation of self-esteem. Furthermore, the programme aims to help students become aware of the impact of self-esteem on their well-being. Students are assisted to process past events and beliefs that harm their self-esteem.

Students learn how to identify their own self-sabotaging behaviours, which prevent them from reaching their full potential. Students are also able to develop healthy assertiveness skills and learn relevant self-esteem-building skills. Forty-two students completed the programme during 2025.



The *REBT programme* is a practical, action-oriented approach to assisting individuals overcome and cope with adversity, achieve goals, and enhance personal growth by addressing attitudes, unhealthy emotions, and maladaptive thought patterns and behaviours. During 2025, the programme had 341 registrations, with 91 students completing the programme.

Feedback from students regarding the REBT programme

- I enjoyed learning about how to challenge my own negative beliefs and related a lot to the John case study.
- I enjoyed learning practical skills for managing negative emotions. The focus on identifying and challenging irrational beliefs was the valuable takeaway, giving me effective tools for self-improvement.
- I enjoyed studying REBT theory; it challenged me in such a way that I was able to create my very own example to apply this theory and it worked.
- I enjoyed that the programme taught me not to focus on the bad things that are happening in my life but to cherish the little that I accomplish.
- I liked how the REBT programme helped me understand how my thoughts affect my feelings and actions. The tools, like questioning negative thoughts and replacing them with more helpful ones, were really useful.
- I liked that it also wanted me to reflect on my well-being and understanding of people around me.
- I realised that the way I think about situations can have an impact on my life.



The *GROW project* is a scientifically designed mental health project that aims to develop participants to engage life in a way that creates **G**rowth, builds **R**esilience, cultivates **O**ptimism, and achieves overall **W**ellness (i.e. GROW). We used the social sciences and research evidence to create a project that has the best possible potential to cultivate certain competencies and skills in participants, which will enable them to cope more effectively with the ups and downs of life and to flourish as human beings. Thirty students completed the six-week programme in 2025.



The *DBT programme* is a skills-based group, offering practical skills to assist students in the following areas: regulating emotions, improving interpersonal relationships, gaining self-awareness, practising mindfulness, and building distress tolerance.

This is an eight-week programme which consists of weekly two-hour sessions. SCD's DBT skills-based group aims to teach the participants the skills mentioned above through multiple methods, including didactic instruction, group discussion, role-playing, and homework assignments. The group provides a supportive environment where participants can practise what they are learning and receive feedback from the therapist facilitating the group and their peers. Eight students completed the eight-week programme in 2025.

The **Postgraduate Accounting Student Support (PASS)** programme systematically provides mental health support services and resources to postgraduate chartered accounting students. It was developed in consultation with the School of Accountancy and constitutes a partnership with SCD.

The *PASS* programme aims to design, develop, implement and evaluate initiatives (i.e. projects, activities, and mechanisms) to support the academic success and holistic well-being of Postgraduate Chartered Accounting (PGCA) students. These initiatives include mental health awareness and literacy activities, mental health knowledge and skills development sessions, and access to counselling services. The programme analyses student physical spaces and applies environmental engineering practices and activities, where possible, to positively influence student engagement and their lived experiences.

The PASS Programme continued to promote the academic success and mental well-being of Postgraduate Chartered Accounting (PGCA) students through a range of psychoeducational workshops, activity-based learning experiences, and mental health awareness initiatives. During 2025, the programme recorded a 300% increase in outputs, supported more than 400 students, and achieved participant satisfaction ratings of 85–100%. Strong collaboration with the School of Accountancy, the use of innovative digital platforms, and active student engagement further enhanced programme delivery. Positive feedback was reflected in 83% of PGCA students recommending the continuation of the programme in 2026.



1.2.2 Extra-time applications

In SCD’s continued partnership with the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS), Vhutali Ndou represented SCD as part of the Reasonable Accommodation Panel (RAP). The primary aim of RAP is to mitigate the impact of a person’s impairment on their ability to perform essential functions as a student at the UFS (most importantly, assessments) and to create an inclusive and enabling environment. The review accommodated 78 students who needed support.

Extra-time applications Challenges the students presented with	
- Depression and anxiety - ADD - ADHD - Autism	- Dyslexia - Dysgraphia - Slow handwriting

Table 25: Challenges the students presented with when applying for extra time

Moreover, CUADS helped SCD refer students in financial need to an educational psychologist and covered the cost of their assessments.

1.2.3 Online Mental Health Resources (#WW / Toolkit / Roadmap)

SCD believes in guiding students to reach their full potential. The services offered to students in SCD are multi-layered, with one of these layers being online mental health resources. The SCD website is regularly updated and provides access to interactive self-help material online. It is therefore available 24/7 and students can access it whenever they prefer; it also provides a platform where students can be educated about mental health. Interactive self-help tools are provided on the website for students to access. SCD has an online presence on Blackboard (the online learning platform of the UFS), on social media platforms, as well as on the SCD website. When you have time, go browse a bit!

In addition to the extensive information available on the website, the SCD Road Map – developed in 2023 – is widely distributed and guides students on how to access different services in SCD.

Social Work Services

1.2.4 Webinars/Workshops/Programmes/ Presentations

South Campus

Presentations on healthy relationships, stress management, the substance abuse policy, the dangers of substance abuse, and the intersecting relationship between substances and relationships were made to the student community face-to-face. The presentations took place at the student residences (Legae, Liberty, Toka) and the day residence (Unison), except for two presentations on the BFN Campus. The presentations were made by the campus social worker, the intern social worker, and second-year social work interns, with support from peer educators and SCD influencers. Peer educators and SCD influencers played a critical role in representing student voices on the action committees of both the intern social worker and the second-year social work students.

Table 26: Workshops on the South Campus



Bloemfontein Campus			
Topic Addressed	Context	Statistics	Photos
Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Awareness Workshop In collaboration with: Protection Services, Student Counselling and Development Student Discipline and Mediation Unit FAMSA	Educated participants on gender-based violence, emotional regulation, assertive communication, and available support services.	80 students	
Sex talk collaboration	Structured debates and open dialogue to encourage critical thinking, respectful discussion, and peer learning around sensitive topics such as sexuality, relationships, and boundaries	50 students	
Women's Wellness Awareness Workshop	The project aimed to raise awareness among women students about the mental and emotional support services available to them and how to access these services. This was a collaborative initiative between the Pregnancy Crisis Centre, Student Counselling and Development (SCD), and Engo, which strengthened awareness and support for students.	40 students	

Table 27: Workshops on the Bloemfontein Campus

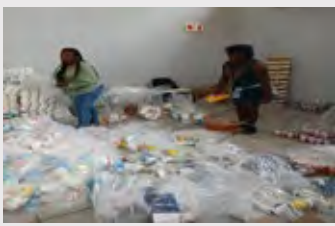
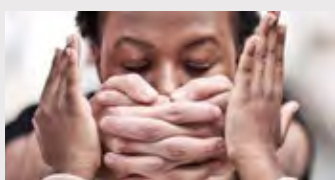
Qwaqwa Campus			
Topic Addressed	Context	Statistics	Photos
Interfaith Service Prayer	The Social Work Office, in collaboration with the SRC: Religious representative, The Humanities, the Postgraduate Centre, and Arts and Culture, hosted two Interfaith Prayer Services on 20 February and 13 August 2025. The events brought together pastors, traditional leaders, and traditional healers from various faith traditions to support students' spiritual and emotional well-being while promoting ethical values.	900 students	
No Student Hungry Programme	The No Student Hungry (NSH) Programme provides our students in need with modest food allowances and daily access to one balanced meal. The programme allows students to focus on their studies without worrying about their next meal, increasing their chances to excel academically and ultimately obtain their degrees.		
Pre-exam session	The preexam session was organised by the Circle of Experts and Education and held on 16 May 2025. The following departments collaborated with the two circles: Student Academic Services (including invigilators), the Student Representative Council, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and the Faculties of Natural Sciences, Education, and The Humanities.	139 students	
Gender-based violence dialogue	The Social Work Office concluded Women's Month on a high note by hosting the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Dialogue in collaboration with external stakeholders. The theme for the day was Zero tolerance for GBV: expose the perpetrator, curb a vicious cycle.	180 students	
Substance abuse awareness dialogues	Goal: To raise awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The social worker conducted a substance abuse awareness session and screened the film "Monate jou Lekker Ding" at the residences.	406 students	
Substance abuse workshop	The session was conducted by the Social Work Office, in collaboration with the local Social Development Office. The UFS Substance Abuse Policy was highlighted to the students.	114 students	
Financial Management workshop	A financial management workshop was conducted in collaboration with the Social Support Office and Absa to educate students on sound financial practices and raise awareness about financial scams.	244 students	

Table 28: Workshops on the South Campus

1.2.5 Groups

On the South Campus, the social work intern conducted a therapeutic group on the adjustment of first-year students to university. The group spread over eight sessions and was reported to have been beneficial by group members.

Two grief support groups for students were facilitated by the social work interns on the Bloemfontein Campus. The goal was to assist in finding comfort, guidance, and connection as participants journey through the healing process. This was an eight-week programme, and each group consisted of ten participants.

1.3 SCD Partnerships, Collaborations, and Networking Opportunities

1.3.1 SADAG Careline and screening

The dedicated toll-free student mental health careline, operated by the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), took effect on 1 September 2020. This helpline provides free telephonic counselling, containment, crisis intervention, and support, as well as referrals to mental health professionals and other psychosocial resources, to all registered UFS students. The details and location of each student caller are recorded, along with a detailed description of the nature of the difficulties the student is experiencing, as well as the support provided in terms of referrals/advice on how best to manage their situation. According to the case management principles applied by SADAG, follow-up calls are made to students in crisis to track their situations and ensure that they are making positive progress.

Since 1 September 2021, SADAG has also taken over the screening process from SCD. This means that every student who contacts SCD for a session is first contacted by SADAG and an initial screening session is conducted online. From these calls/sessions, SADAG will then refer students to SCD if the student is still in need of further counselling or intervention. If a student is not referred to SCD for further intervention, it means that the student has been sufficiently assisted/contained. When a student at SCD presents with emotional/psychological challenges bordering on an emergency, the first port of call will be to refer the student to a telephonic consultation with SADAG.



The following tables provide a monthly overview of the number of students assisted by SADAG throughout 2025.



MONTH		JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL		MAY		JUNE	
NUMBER OF CALLS		390		513		537		498		476		428	
GENDER		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		81%	19%	74%	21%	77%	23%	79%	21%	80%	20%	71%	29%
RACE	African	91%		64%		67%		74%		70%		57%	
	White	6%		19%		17%		12%		12%		26%	
	Coloured	0%		11%		11%		8%		12%		15%	
	Indian	3%		6%		5%		6%		3%		2%	
CAMPUS	Bfn	54%		74%		71%		65%		60%		62%	
	QQ	2%		2%		3%		2%		2%		4%	
	South	0%		1%		2%		0%		1%		1%	
	Undisclosed	44%		23%		24%		33%		37%		33%	
TOP THREE REASONS FOR CALLS		Academic stress 24%		Anxiety 15%		Depression 13%		Anxiety 16%		Academic stress 18%		Academic stress 20%	
		Bereavement 13%		Bereavement 13%		Anxiety 12%		Academic stress 14%		Stress 14%		Family issues 16%	
		Family issues 13%		Family issues 13%		Academic stress 11%		Depression 13%		Depression 12%		Stress 14%	
SUPPORT PROVIDED		Psychological first aid 67%		Psychological first aid 35%		Psychological first aid 39%		Psychological first aid 47%		Referred to UFS psychologists 34%		Psychological first aid 44%	
		General enquiries 21%		General enquiries 21%		Referred to UFS psychologists 37%		Referred to UFS psychologists 28%		Psychological first aid 29%		Student support facilities 29%	
		Referred to UFS psychologists 6%		Student support facilities 19%		Student support facilities 12%		Student support facilities 11%		Student support facilities 20%		Referred to UFS psychologists 12%	

MONTH		JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
NUMBER OF CALLS		545		625		581		579		540		460	
GENDER		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		74%	26%	76%	24%	77%	23%	71%	29%	64%	36%	55%	45%
RACE	African	58%		76%		68%		73%		75%		94%	
	White	20%		9%		10%		7%		5%		2%	
	Coloured	15%		15%		17%		15%		17%		3%	
	Indian	7%		0%		5%		5%		3%		1%	
CAMPUS	Bfn	64%		76%		79%		74%		72%		71%	
	QQ	4%		2%		4%		3%		4%		1%	
	South	2%		0%		1%		1%		1%		1%	
	Undisclosed	30%		22%		16%		22%		23%		27%	
TOP THREE REASONS FOR CALLS		Academic stress 18%		Academic stress 21%		Academic stress 20%		Academic stress 16%		Academic stress 15%		Anxiety 26%	
		Depression 15%		Anxiety 13%		Anxiety 14%		Anxiety 12%		Depression 13%		Stress 20%	
		Family issues 13%		Depression 12%		Stress 13%		Stress 11%		Anxiety 13%		Depression 18%	
SUPPORT PROVIDED		Psychological first aid 37%		Psychological first aid 41%		Psychological first aid 49%		Psychological first aid 53%		Psychological first aid 61%		Psychological first aid 83%	
		Referred to UFS psychologists 25%		Referred to UFS psychologists 31%		Referred to UFS psychologists 26%		Referred to UFS psychologists 17%		Student support facilities 17%		Student support facilities 7%	
		Student support facilities 23%		Student support facilities 13%		Student support facilities 14%		Student support facilities 15%		Referred to UFS psychologists 9%		Referred to Faculty Advisers 4%	

Table 29: Statistics of students who contacted SADAG

The next table reflects on the SADAG utilisation from 2022.

Month	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	367	361	368	390
February	375	389	476	513
March	392	548	598	537
April	409	548	594	498
May	392	625	599	476
June	416	423	407	428
July	402	581	458	545

Month	2022	2023	2024	2025
August	434	632	449	625
September	486	687	479	581
October	502	668	527	579
November	538	643	497	540
December	389	391	383	460
TOTAL	5 102	6 496	5 635	6 172

Table 30: 2022–2025 comparison of SADAG statistics

Reflecting on four years of data from SADAG (2022–2025), it is evident that the Careline was well utilised during 2025. The number of calls during 2025 (6 172) is the second highest since the implementation of the Careline.

1.3.2 Project Empower

Project Empower is a collaborative initiative between SCD, KovsieSport and the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The project aims to empower high-performance student-athletes through holistic support focusing on psychological, academic, and sporting performance. The project underwent significant growth this year and provided services to multiple sporting teams, namely: KovsieHockey (men and women), KovsieRugby (women), KovsieFootball (men and women), KovsieNetball (women) as well as KovsieCricket.

The project was successful in several ways:

- A strong and positive relationship was established with the Residence Council: Sports, Health, and Wellness members from all the residences, promoting collaboration and engagement within student communities. Through initiatives such as branding, ticket purchasing, and collaborations, there was significant growth in unity across the sporting codes, with teams increasingly supporting one another and fostering a shared sense of purpose.
- Significantly, there was an increase in the utilisation of SCD services by student-athletes, reflecting greater awareness and use of available support. In line with the objective of inclusivity, we launched the project in Qwaqwa with a comprehensive coaches' training initiative to strengthen local capacity and align with the broader framework.

- Achievements of note include the KovsieHockey men's team gaining promotion to the 2026 USSA Section B, the KovsieNetball women's team second-place finish in Varsity Netball Cup 2025, as well as the KovsieFootball men's team historic championship win of the Varsity Football Cup 2025.



The women's rugby USSA team-building send-off

1.3.3 ER24

The management of crises within the changing climate at the UFS is an important matter that had to be revisited. Crises can manifest in a variety of ways, ranging from serious sports injuries, psychological, physical (injuries), to illness and managing the consequences of crowd unrest and disasters (fire in a building / residence). These types of incidents have a very specific reputational risk for the university and pose risks to students and staff. A more integrated and comprehensive emergency service was needed, especially from a service provision, compliance, risk management, medico-legal and legal-litigious perspective. The increase in stakeholder expectations around emergency care, increases in liability claims, changes in the complexity of medical care provision, legal changes in transporting at-risk patients, and changes in acute care compelled a revision of the crisis service provided at the UFS.

Despite the South African Depression and Anxiety Group's (SADAG) telephonic and screening assistance, SCD still needed an additional team to physically visit a student in case of emergency. The severity and frequency of our students' mental health challenges have increased significantly. In most of these cases, it was evident that the assistance of a paramedic or medical professional was needed.



An ER24 pilot project was approved for six months, from 1 October 2022. The pilot was successful and significantly impacted service delivery, after which a one-year contract was signed with ER24. As this contract lapsed on 15 May 2024, a two-year contract could be negotiated with ER24. As this service provider has a national footprint, it can respond to a registered UFS student's emergency nationwide. This has greatly assisted with service delivery on all three of our campuses during crises. The UFS ER24 number could only be activated by UFS staff using authorisation numbers, and students did not have direct access to this number.

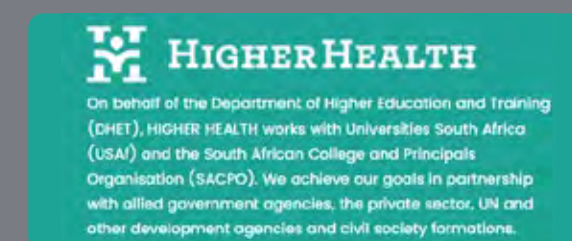
The assistance provided by ER24 during 2025 can be seen in the table below.

ER24	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Group sessions	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	7
Trauma counselling	0	14	23	15	16	3	1	11	12	6	3	0	104
Telephone counselling	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	7	0	0	9
Total	0	14	25	15	17	4	2	11	13	16	3	0	120

Table 31: ER24 statistics

1.3.4 Higher Health

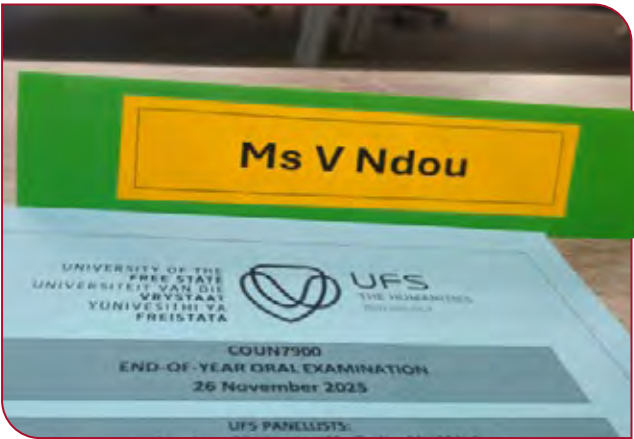
Higher Health provides funding for health and wellness programmes and facilitates training for peer educators.



Rainbow Seed supported the training of peer educators by facilitating sessions on gender diversity topics. The Free State Department of Health (FSDoH) provided services during First Things First campaigns, including HIV testing and screening for tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and non-communicable diseases. The FSDoH also provided primary health care services and HIV medication to the clinic, enabling professional nurses to treat registered UFS students free of charge in accordance with specific protocols.

1.3.5 Department of Social Work

Neo Ravhuhali, social worker on the South Campus, served on the Social Work Academic Advisory Board. In essence, the role of this board is to advise and support the School of Social Work with curriculum matters, academic programmes, and avenues for accessing potential funding opportunities. The tenure for serving is three years per term. This year, the committee was able to support the planning and execution of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) Conference, which was hosted at the UFS from 9 to 12 September 2025. The board also played a significant role in the amendment of the screening and admission requirements for entry into the Bachelor of Social Work qualification.



1.3.6 Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology at the UFS had oral examinations for its master’s students on 26 November 2025. SCD was invited to be part of the panel as an external examiner. Vhutali Ndou represented SCD as part of a continuing collaboration with the department to ensure that interns are sufficiently prepared for the internship aspect of their training, which also benefits SCD’s internship programme, as some UFS students end up at SCD for an internship. The Department of Psychology is doing an impeccable job of training future counselling psychologists.

1.3.7 Protection Services

During 2025, facilitators hosted seven interactive workshops for students across various faculties and year groups at the University of the Free State (UFS), engaging students on the theme of personal boundaries. The workshops aimed to strengthen students’ self-awareness, emotional literacy, and interpersonal boundary-setting skills as protective factors against gender-based violence (GBV) and relational harm. This was a partnership between Protection Services and SCD.

A psychologist from SCD joined the hosting team for each of the engagement sessions. This proved to be an immense benefit, since the students were able to speak with a mental health specialist in an informal setting. Because it was a group format all participants benefited from the psychologist’s insight and advice. 207 students participated in the workshops.

- Across sessions, facilitators observed the following:
- High levels of *emotional honesty* and willingness to share personal experiences.
 - Increasing *confidence and assertiveness* as sessions progressed.
 - Deep *peer empathy* and solidarity emerging through shared vulnerability.
 - A strong *connection between boundary-setting and leadership development*.



Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee also served as programme director for the Ministerial Campus Safety Launch in March 2025.

1.3.8 Housing and Residence Affairs

SCD collaborated with Housing and Residence Affairs (HRA) on a student leadership development project. The training, scheduled for January 2025, included all the student leaders within residences and day residences on all three campuses. HRA strives to establish dynamic, diverse, and safe student living and learning environments. Student leaders, also known as residence committee members (RCs), have an integral role in these living and learning communities.

The training was divided into two days – 14 and 15 January on the Bloemfontein and South Campuses, and 20 and 21 January on the Qwaqwa Campus. The overall theme of Day 1 was *Getting to know yourself and others better*. The overall theme of Day 2 was *Taking care of yourself while leading others*. The number of students who attended the different days of training can be seen in Table 32, 33, and 34. Attendance registers were completed daily.

The number of students attending the different days of training can be seen in the tables below. Attendance registers were completed daily.

Bloemfontein Campus	North College	South College	Central College	East College	West College
Number booked	46	46	46	67	52
Day 1 Attendance	33	52	42	52	44
Day 1 Attendance	36	50	41	56	46

Table 32: Attendance on the Bloemfontein Campus

South Campus	
Number booked	38
Day 1 Attendance	23
Day 2 Attendance	24

Table 33: Attendance on South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus	
Number booked	Unknown
Day 1 Attendance	63
Day 2 Attendance	61

Table 34: Attendance on the Qwaqwa Campus

On Day 1, a total of 309 RCs were trained and on Day 2 a total of 314 RCs were trained. On the South Campus, there was a big discrepancy between the expected number of students and the number of students who attended the training. Education tudents had to do practicals and could not attend the training. This impacted the South Campus especially. Students completed evaluation forms – via a QR code – and the feedback was summarised.

1.3.9 Co-Curricular Hub

The Co-Curricular Hub ensures that co-curricular offerings at the UFS are specially designed to align with the university’s Vision 130, which has the values of excellence, innovation, impact, accountability, care, and social justice at its core. At SCD, we have mapped four of our programmes with the assistance of the hub. The hub had an official launch where Vhutali Ndou represented SCD; she is also part of the Co-Curricular Hub team.



1.3.10 Occupational Therapy

The Department of Occupational Therapy (OT) at the UFS established a campus-based training practice where senior students (third- and fourth-years) started to rotate during their clinical fieldwork training. The name of the practice is Occupational Solutions, and for 2025, third-year students were placed in the practice. Collaboration between this practice and SCD was initiated during 2025 and developed into a strong partnership. Student clients at SCD were referred for assistance to the OT department, and regular discussions were conducted between the departments to ensure alignment as well as student-centred service delivery.

1.3.11 Mental Health Summit with Human Resources

The Department of Organisational Development within Human Resources at the UFS hosted a Be Better: from Awareness to Action – Mental Health Summit on 3 October 2025. The summit focused on the theme: *Be Better, Take Action! Awareness is the first step; action is the journey.* The programme featured keynote speaker Felicia Goosen, who shared her personal journey across different developmental stages. Each stage of her story was supported by professional input from panel members to help the audience understand the practical implications and take action. Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee (Director: HWC) served as a panel member and presented on *Adolescence and Young Adulthood: Identity, Loss, and Recovery.*



1.3.12 Multi-faceted assistance to students – Transport to hospital

Through a memorandum of understanding with Zeus Shuttles, SCD provides safe transportation for students who require visits to state hospitals or clinics. This support is primarily offered to students who need to attend non-emergency appointments or collect prescribed medication but lack the financial means to travel independently. While hospital referrals continue to pose significant challenges, this arrangement has proven effective in meeting students' immediate needs. However, additional funding will be necessary to maintain and strengthen the sustainability of this initiative. Sixty-five students benefited from this service.

Consultations with general practitioners and psychiatrists

Due to continuing challenges in referring students to district hospitals for medical assistance, SCD has established an interim arrangement to cover the cost of student consultations with doctors at Kopsie Health Services and an ad hoc psychiatrist (Dr E Machai). While this solution is not ideal, it has proven effective in addressing immediate needs. However, additional funding will be necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of this arrangement. A total of 295 students were referred to the Kopsie Health GPs, and Dr Machai (psychiatrist) had 168 sessions.

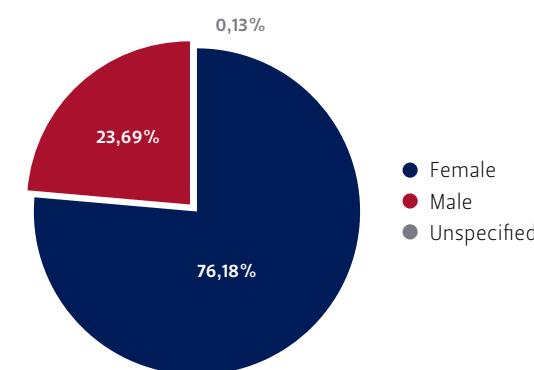
1.3.13 Institutional involvement (committees, forums, councils – can also be national or international)

- UFS Council.
- Readmission and Appeals (RAC) involvement for the Faculties of Health Sciences and Economic and Management Sciences.
- DSA Co-Curricular team.
- The Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS): Extra time applications.
- Sexual Offences Response Team (SORT).
- Support Services Risk Management Committee.
- Student Health and Wellness Coordinating Committee.
- Social Impact Forum.
- Social Support Services Forum.
- School of Social Work Advisory Board.

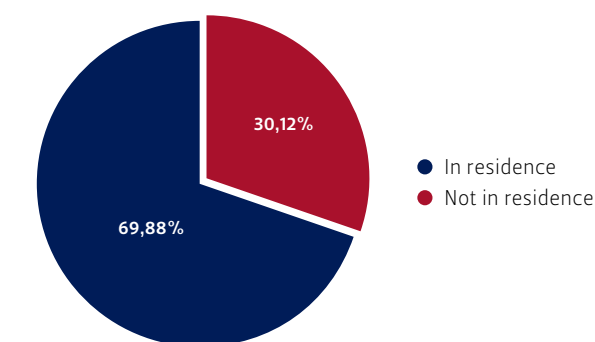
1.4 SCD Student Profile

The following section provides a glimpse into the student clientele using the services of SCD on all three campuses.

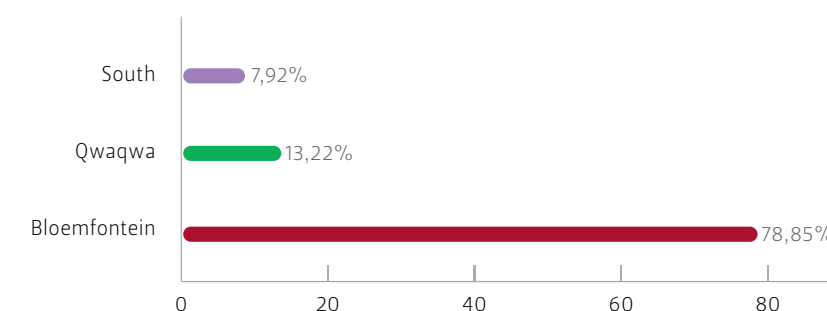
Graphs 1 and 2 indicate that the majority of clients visiting SCD on all three campuses during 2025 were women living off campus.



Graph 1: Gender distribution of SCD clients

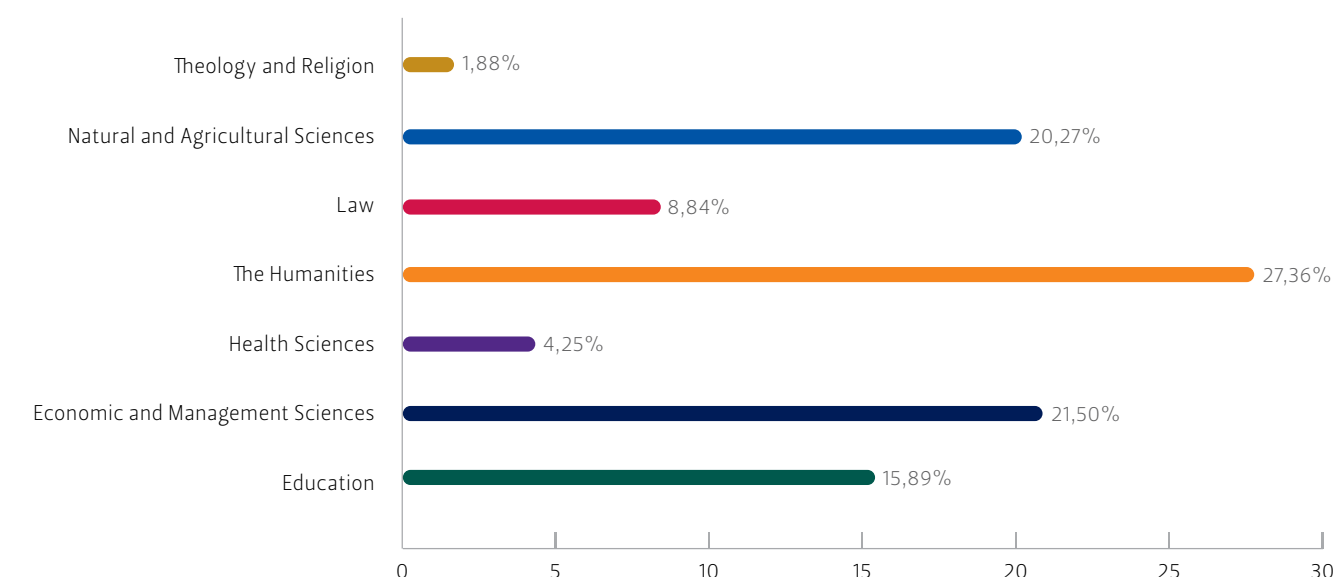


Graph 2: Accommodation status of SCD clients

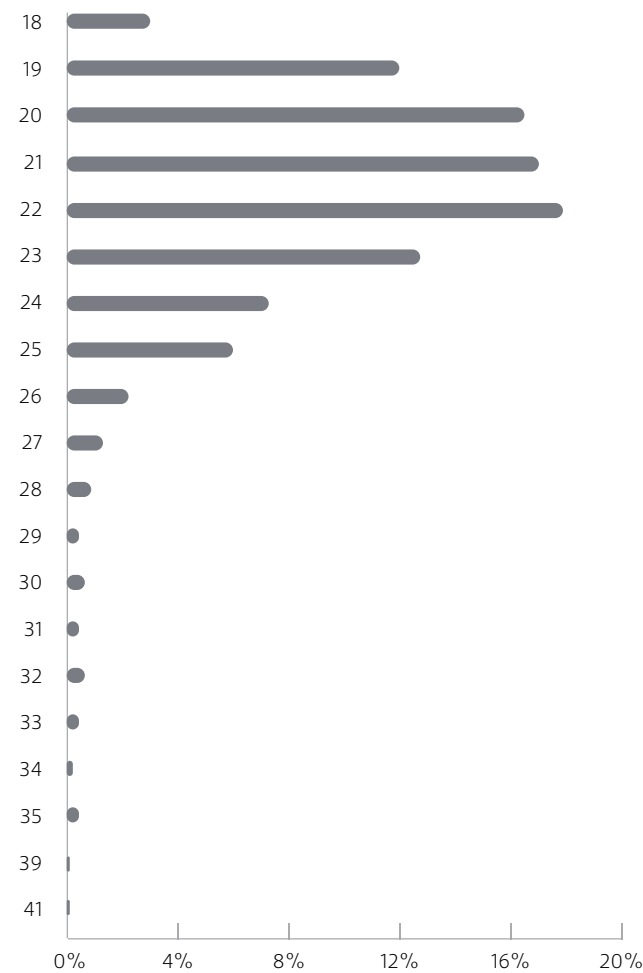


Graph 3: Campus distribution of SCD clients

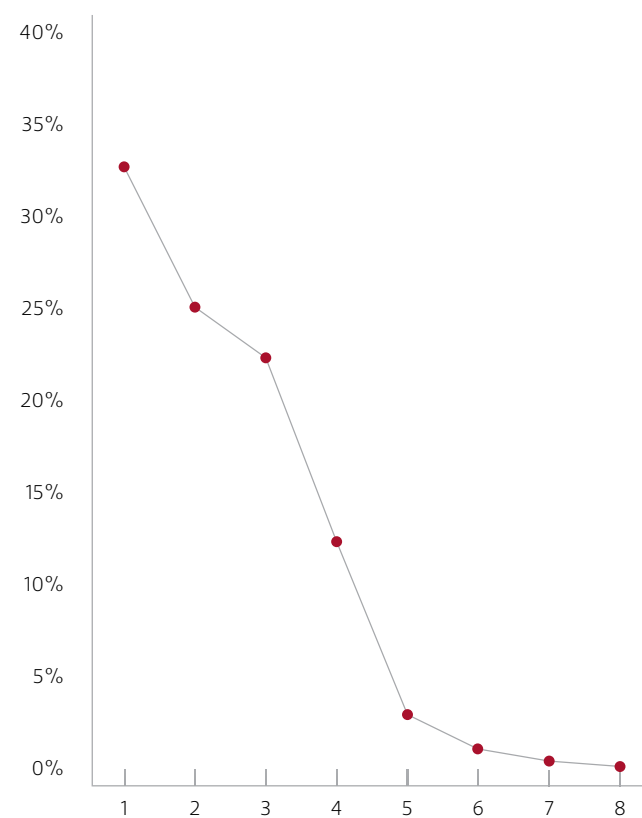
Graphs 3 and 4 illustrate that the majority of clients were from the Bloemfontein Campus, and the faculty where most clients studied was the Faculty of The Humanities. The Bloemfontein Campus is the biggest campus of the UFS, and the Faculty of The Humanities is also the biggest faculty at the institution.



Graph 4: Faculty distribution of SCD clients



Graph 5: SCD clients' age distribution



Graph 6: SCD clients' year of study

SCD clients are mostly in their first year of study and the majority of students who present to SCD are 22 years old.

2. PILLAR TWO: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Developmental opportunities for staff (training, achievements):

2.1.1 Staff training

A variety of training sessions and professional development opportunities were offered to SCD staff throughout the year.

Belinda Janeke facilitated a Professional Conduct Session on the Bloemfontein and South Campuses, highlighting best practices and tools for improved workplace efficiency. A two-day Couples Counselling Training provided practical techniques from intake to termination, while a five-day Play Therapy Training enhanced interns' and supervisors' skills in both directive and non-directive modalities when working with children. The Career Crafting: Rethinking Career Development webinar, presented by Prof Liezel Massyn, explored evolving graduate attributes and strategies to modernise career counselling. Prof Andre Venter presented on Dealing with ADHD and discussed developmental variations and treatment approaches.

Further professional growth was supported through participation in the University of the Western Cape's Mental Health Colloquium, themed *Building Resilient Campuses*, and the second Annual Supporting At-Risk Students Conference, which emphasised multidisciplinary collaboration for holistic student support. The HWC Director attended Leadership 2.0: Ethical Leadership and a session on Harassment, Bullying and Intimidation in the Workplace, both reinforcing values-based leadership and safe workplace practices. The DSA Professional Development Series (three parts) addressed professional conduct, the responsible use of social media, and leveraging technology, including artificial intelligence, for improved efficiency and professional growth.



2.1.2 Staff Well-being

A range of initiatives were implemented to support staff well-being, cohesion, and morale throughout the year.

The team participated in a teambuilding event at Elude Escape, where solving puzzles in an interactive escape room encouraged teamwork, problem-solving, and communication. The SCD mid-year planning session in July provided an opportunity to reflect on first-semester progress, refine roles and responsibilities, and strengthen collaboration within the HWC alongside Kopsie Health and the HIV Office. At the end of November, SCD held its annual strategic planning session at the Ashwood Boutique Hotel. Highlights, challenges, and 2026 plans were discussed during the day. Regular SCD group case discussions offered a supportive platform for mental health practitioners to engage in group supervision, share insights, and learn from one another.

Staff also enjoyed several wellness and appreciation events. The Wonderful Wednesday wellness afternoon encouraged gratitude and connection over food and conversation. The annual 'Spokie' gift exchange fostered camaraderie and joy through week-long, thoughtful exchanges. Catherine's Appreciation Day celebrated the invaluable contributions of the team's messenger/cleaner through notes and gifts, while the UFS Women's Breakfast provided inspiration and recognition for women staff members.

To conclude the year, a Year-End Function was held at Urth, where staff enjoyed a relaxed brunch and Secret Santa exchange. Collectively, these activities strengthened relationships, fostered team spirit, and reinforced a positive and appreciative workplace culture.



2.1.3 Funding provided for HPCSA / SACSSP annual fees and CPD training

Funding has been provided by the department to support the professional registration and continuous development of our mental health practitioners. The department covers the annual registration fees for all psychologists, registered counsellors, and social workers with their respective professional bodies (HPCSA and SACSSP). Additionally, funding is allocated for staff to attend relevant CPD-accredited training and conferences throughout the year, ensuring continued professional development, compliance, and the delivery of high-quality services.

2.1.4 SCD Counselling Psychology Internship

The Counselling Psychology Internship Programme continues to serve as a dynamic and transformative space for emerging counselling psychologists to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice. The 2025 programme offered interns a comprehensive learning experience that included individual and group psychotherapy, psychometric assessments, case formulation, community outreach, training, and supervision. Through these experiences, interns are equipped with the practical skills, professional ethics, and confidence needed to thrive as future practitioners.

In 2025, we proudly welcomed our new intern counselling psychologists: **Rachel Moffat, Izelle van Tonder, Tebogo Rachidi, and Keneilwe Molebale**. Each of them demonstrated a deep commitment to professional growth, empathy in client work, and active engagement within the broader counselling community.

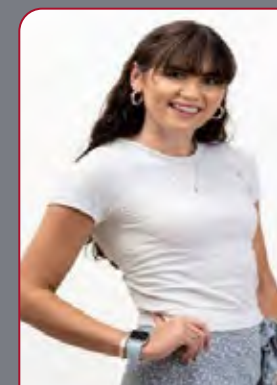
The SCD Counselling Internship Programme remains dedicated to fostering excellence, resilience, and reflective practice among our interns. As the programme evolves, it continues to shape competent and compassionate mental health professionals who contribute meaningfully to the field of psychology and to the well-being of the communities we serve.



Izelle van Tonder



Keneilwe Molebale



Rachel Moffat



Tebogo Rachidi

2.1.5 Social Work Internship

During 2025, the SCD Social Work Internship Programme continued in collaboration with the Social Work academic department. Social work interns were placed on both the Bloemfontein and South Campuses. The programme complements SCD's social work services with individual case work, group work, and community work. As part of community work, interns conducted awareness campaigns as well as support groups. The interns on the Bloemfontein Campus were Minenhle Dladla and Kenalamang Boitsemang. On the South Campus, three social work interns were placed with SCD. One of the students, Anathi Mzimba, was initially placed in February, but only continued with her internship until May 2025. Subsequently, two more interns, Rethabile Thontsi and Sashne Cryer, were placed with the social worker (in June 2025). Thontsi was placed at SCD South Campus and Cryer was placed at ENGO Family Care. The social worker served as agency supervisor (AS) for Thontsi and as field instructor (FI) for Cryer, respectively.

2.1.6 Involvement with Sport Psychology

Through Project Empower, the Psychology first-year master's students at the UFS were given the opportunity to learn about sports psychology as part of their postgraduate studies.

Tebogo Malatjie, who works as a sports psychologist with the university's student-athletes, conducted three half-day sessions with the M1 students between August and September.

These sessions covered various topics, such as Orientation to Sport Psychology: Approach, Context, and Methods; The Role of Resilience in Sport; and The History and Application of Evidence-Based Interventions in Sports Psychology. The students also learned about psychometric testing and the application of results through reports. The feedback from both the students and the course coordinator was positive, and the collaboration will continue in 2026.



Somewhere,
something
incredible is
waiting to be
known.

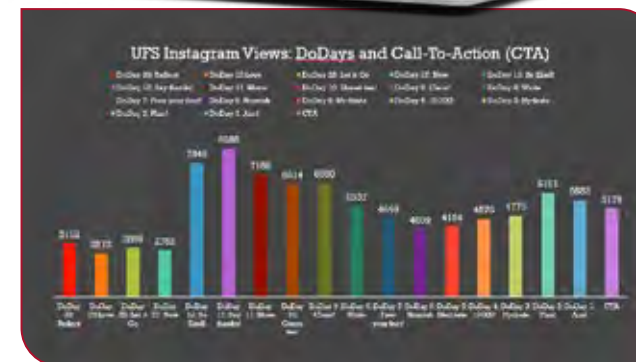
CARL SAGAN

3. PILLAR THREE: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

3.1 Communication and Marketing

Website / Webinars / Promotional materials

During 2025, SCD entered into a contract with Viral Solutions, a digital marketing agency, which will be responsible for managing SCD's social media pages and marketing of the Health and Wellness Centre from January 2026. The goal in 2025 was to increase use of the SCD social media platforms by creating more frequent, visually appealing posts.



3.2 Institutional mental health campaign

The DODAY Mental Health Communication Campaign launched by Student Counselling and Development (SCD) aimed to promote mental health awareness and engagement across all UFS campuses. Using diverse platforms and strategies, the campaign achieved significant visibility and interaction, despite challenges such as resource limitations and campus disruptions. Key outputs included more than 250 social media posts, website features, interactive Genially resources, billboards, posters, and branded promotional items. Multimedia efforts, including videos and an animated call-to-action, further enhanced reach. Strategic partnerships with DCM, KopsieX, KopsieSport, and Health and Wellness staff amplified impact.

Results were notable: 250 000+ views on UFS social media, 40 000+ on SCD platforms, and dramatic increases in engagement – 1700% on Facebook and 1800% on Instagram. SCD webpage visits and KopsieLife spotlight views also grew significantly.

Challenges included resource constraints, campus protests, and institutional processes limiting innovation. Recommendations for 2026 focus on a refreshed theme, *Interconnectedness*, emphasising community and shared responsibility. Proposed strategies include shifting towards on-the-ground engagement, enhancing analytics, expanding stakeholder involvement, and securing sufficient resources for high-quality outputs.

The campaign's measurable success provides a strong foundation for future initiatives, reinforcing the importance of collaboration, innovation, and active student participation in promoting mental health.

3.3 Mental Health Awareness

A range of initiatives were implemented to increase mental health awareness among students at the University of the Free State.

SCD's social media platforms were used to raise awareness about mental health. Specific social media posts were created throughout the year to raise awareness about certain mental health issues. For instance, March highlighted Bipolar Awareness Day. September celebrated World Suicide Prevention Day and National ADHD Awareness Day. October focused on World Mental Health Day, encouraging students to talk about mental health difficulties and to seek help. In November, awareness focused on men's mental health – students were encouraged to break the stigma regarding men's mental health. World Stress Awareness Day was also celebrated on 5 November. Apart from using SCD's social media platforms, SCD influencers were used to promote mental health awareness through various activations that encouraged open discussions around mental health and educating students about the services offered by SCD.





3.4 SCD Influencers

SCD uses student volunteers as student ambassadors – these can be either student influencers or peer educators. Student influencers support SCD in marketing and promoting mental health awareness.

The Bloemfontein Campus influencers were:

- Lebohang Mahura
- Neliswa Sibiya
- Fhatuwani Mfikoe
- Nyiko Mahlaola
- Karabo Tiisetso Setona
- Erol Mokoena
- Selaelo Rethabile Rapetsoa
- Yandisa Maphanga
- Abekho Dweba
- Jabulani Tshimong
- Tshireletso Gaborone
- Lilitha Mbelekane
- Promise Conny Thabethe
- Mulweli Mphohoni
- Teboho Nelson Mokoena

The Bloemfontein Campus influencers had a busy year! In March, they distributed posters for Bipolar Awareness Day and pamphlets of SCD’s services on campus. They also attended Higher Health training in April, as well as EMS training and the Gateway obstacle course in May. For Women’s Month in August, the influencers distributed quotes, sweets, and pamphlets of SCD’s services to the women on campus. For Suicide Awareness Day in September, they distributed educational material about suicide, as well as resources received from SADAG. An event was held at the Kopanong Bridge during which the influencers educated students about SCD’s services and encouraged open discussions regarding mental health concerns. In November, the influencers distributed energy bars and quotes for Men’s Mental Health Month on campus to break the stigma surrounding mental health difficulties among men.



A few of the Influencers – from the left: Teboho Mokoena, Erol Mokoena, Promise Thabethe, Rapetsoa Selaelo, Fhatuwani Mfikoe, Neliswa Sibiya, Karabo Tiisetso Setona, Lebo Mahura, Mulweli Mphohoni, and Nyiko Nicolas Mahlaola.

A total of 16 influencers/peer educators assisted with SCD’s activities on the South Campus. *These influencers were:*

- Mduduzi Viliwe
- Trevor Nonyane
- Shanki Mofokeng
- Mashudu Tshivhandekano
- Emilio Mmako
- Champion Zavala
- Esona Mbaza
- Olorato Phemelo Moroke
- Zikhona Nodlolo,
- Mohau Mokoena,
- Thandazwa Kamogelo Jayiya,
- Vuyo Mohammed,
- Zuziwe Hlalukanyo,
- Diasy Phalatsi,
- Dieketseng Motloun
- Mantombazane Kota



SCD South influencers

The influencers assisted with awareness around mental health, substance use and abuse, engagements focusing on LGBTQI+, and HIV/Aids awareness on the South Campus. They took part in awareness initiatives by acting as peers to students, engaging in activations, marketing SCD services, and assisting with setting up and distributing posters.



4. STAFF

The list below depicts the staff complement of SCD during 2025 on the different campuses.

Bloemfontein Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee	Director
Nadia Maloney	Assistant Director: Psychological Services and Senior Counselling Psychologist
Elizabeth Msadu	Assistant Director: Social Work Services
Francois Naudé	Counselling Psychologist
Thirushni Sam	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Tobias van den Bergh	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Vhutali Ndou	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Tebogo Malatjie	Counselling Psychologist
Lucy Sinyanya	Clinical Psychologist
Petro Herbst	Office Manager
Nada Laurie	Finances
Kgalalelo Thaele	Assistant Officer
Catherine Sebokolodi	Cleaner and messenger

Administrative interns	
Tshego Lelimo	Moipone Marumo
Katlego Masike	
Intern Counselling Psychologists	
Rachel Moffat	Tebogo Rachidi
Keneilwe Molebale	
Ad hoc staff	
Bodley van der Westhuizen	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Refloee Seane	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Mathuli Mbhamali	Social Worker
Nonkululeko Selele	Social Worker
Olivia Clelland	Registered Counsellor
Daniela Papgis	Counselling Psychologist
Mieke Fletcher	Learning Development Facilitator
Chané de Wet-Muller	Learning Development Facilitator: Project Empower
Dr Emily Machai	Psychiatrist

Qwaqwa Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Thato Mopeli	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Aubrey Moloto	Registered Counsellor
Sinalo Madlongolwana	Registered Counsellor
Selloane Phoofole	Social Worker
Luyanda Jarana	Counselling Psychologist
Contract administrative staff	
Reitumetse Mofokeng	Administrative Intern
Morapeli Mtshali	Administrative Intern
Intern Social Worker	
Mareshwane Lekhelebane	Intern Social Worker

South Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Loyiso Kosana	Clinical Psychologist
Neo Ravhuhali	Social Worker
Contract administrative staff	
Palesa Dihlabi	Administrative intern

Table 35: SCD staff

Unfortunately, Aubrey Moloto (Registered Counsellor, Qwaqwa Campus), Luyanda Jarana (Counselling Psychologist, Qwaqwa Campus), Lucy Sinyanya (Clinical Psychologist, Bloemfontein Campus), as well as Mosa Setlaba (Counselling Psychologist, Bloemfontein Campus) resigned during 2025. Moloto was selected for his master’s in clinical psychology, while Luyanda was appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Psychology on the Qwaqwa Campus. Sinyanya and Setlaba ventured into private practice.

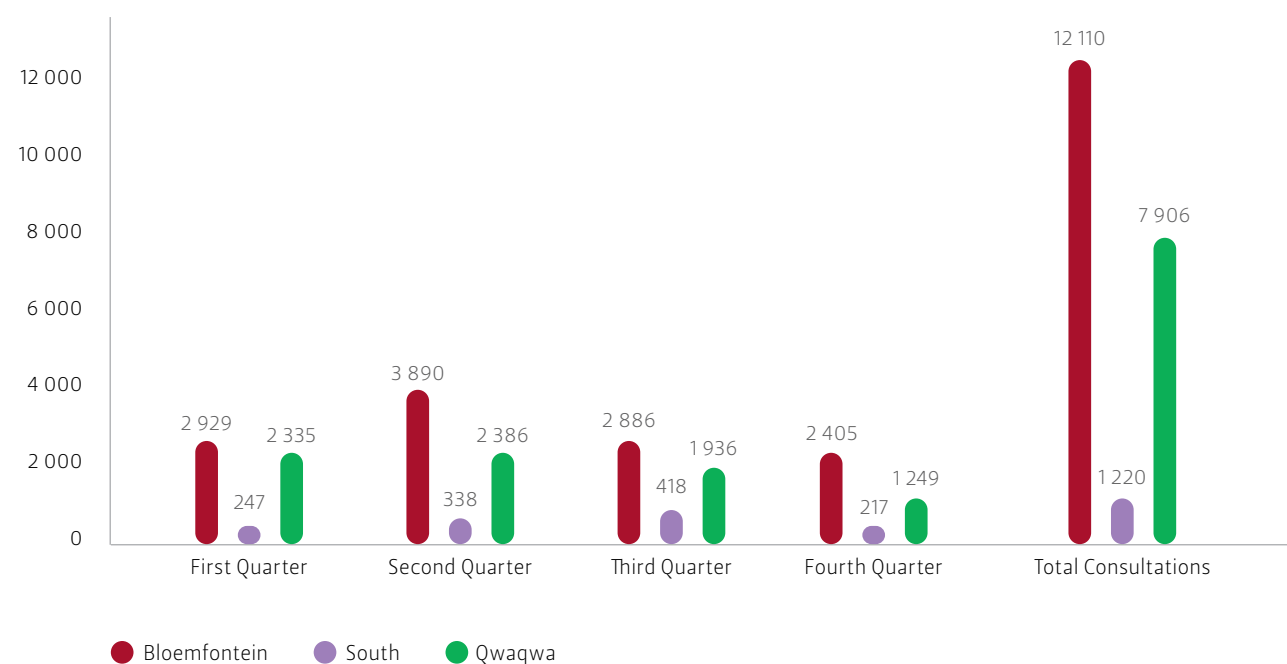


Kovsie Health Services and HIV Office

1. PILLAR ONE: CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS

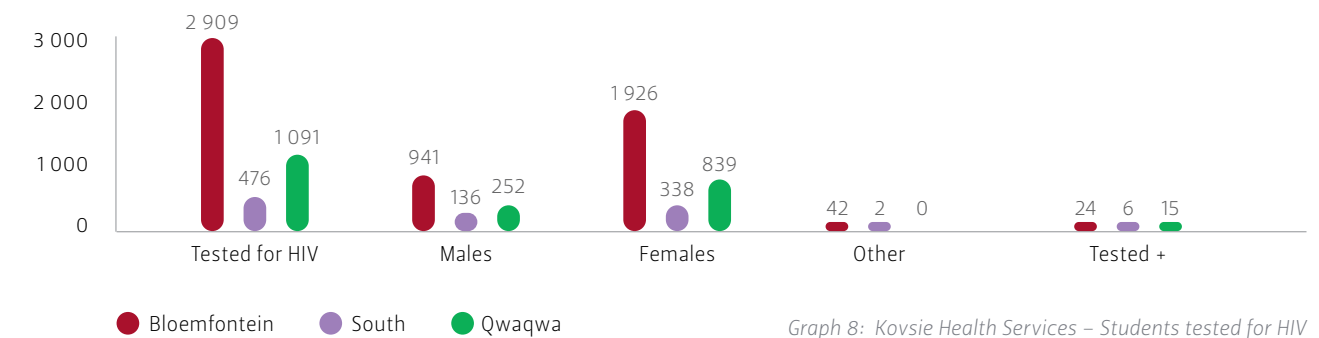
1.1 Services and Interventions

1.1.1 Kovsie Health Services



Graph 7: Kovsie Health Services – Clients seen in 2025

1.1.2 HIV Office

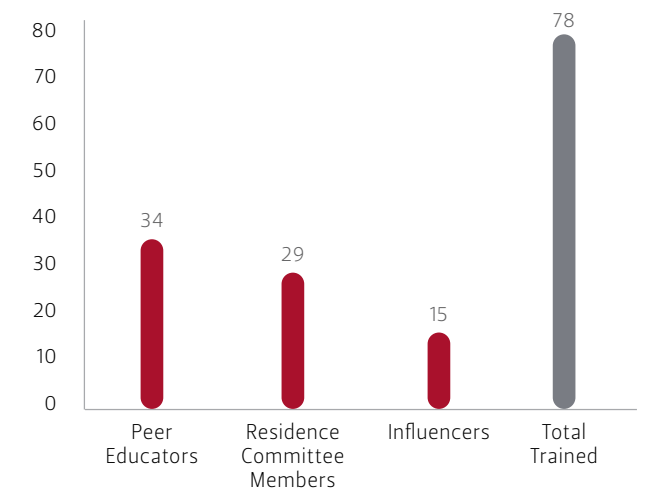


Graph 8: Kovsie Health Services – Students tested for HIV

1.2 Training

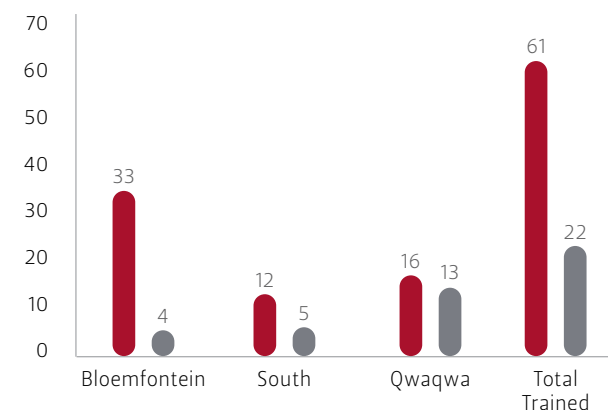
1.2.1 Higher Health Civic and Soft Skills

Using the Civic and Soft Skills course by Higher Health (NQF Level 5), 78 peer educators, influencers, and Residence Committee members from the Bloemfontein and South Campuses were trained on 1–2 March 2025. Covering six modules, it built competencies in emotional intelligence, civic responsibility, communication, resilience, and critical problem-solving to address social challenges.



Graph 9: HIV training activities

● Peer Educators ● Influencers



Graph 10: Peer educator and Influencer training

1.2.2 Peer educator and Influencer training

The peer education training (11–13 April 2025 at Kings Haven) empowered 83 students from the Bloemfontein, South, and Qwaqwa Campuses. Covering HIV/TB/STIs, gender-based violence, mental health, disability, and health topics, it equipped peer educators and influencers with behavioural change skills to drive youth empowerment and wellness education across campuses.

1.3 Campaigns

1.3.1 First Things First Activation (FTF)

FTF is a campaign aimed at encouraging students to know their health status by testing for HIV, screening for tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as non-communicable diseases. During the campaigns, the university partnered with the Department of Health, Love Life, and DKMS Africa to deliver a variety of services, including HIV testing, TB and STI screening, cervical cancer screening, Pap smears, and screening for non-communicable diseases. Education on dental health was also provided. A total of nine campaigns took place during 2025.

1.3.2 Linkage to care

This involves enhancing access to health-care services by improving diagnosis, timely referrals, and ensuring continuity of care for individuals living with or at risk of HIV, TB, and STIs.

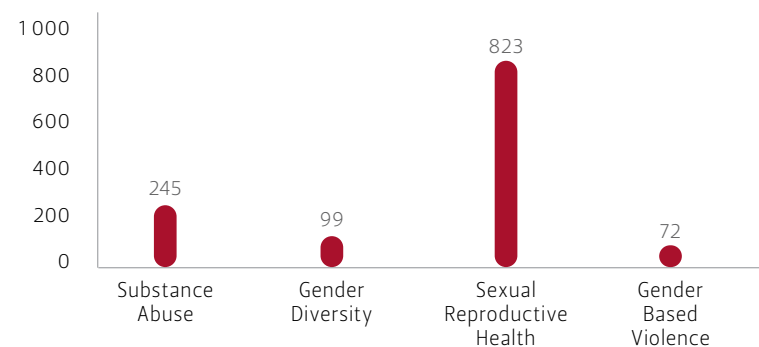
The goal is to ensure that those who tested HIV-positive during campaigns are linked to care, support, and treatment programmes, and to encourage HIV-negative students to remain HIV-negative. In the period January–September 2025, a total of 43 students tested positive; these students were all referred to the clinic for treatment and were encouraged to consult Student Counselling and Development for continued counselling.

1.4 Dialogues, Awareness Campaigns, and Workshops

As part of its continuing awareness and education efforts, the HIV Office facilitated a series of dialogues and awareness campaigns focused on key health and wellness issues. These sessions were designed to encourage informed decision-making and promote a healthy lifestyle among students.

The main topics included the following:

-  Substance Abuse
-  Gender Diversity
-  Sexual and Reproductive Health
-  Gender-Based Violence (GBV)



Graph 11: Dialogues conducted

1.5 Men's imbizo

Gathering 317 students, the 2025 Imbizo on the Qwaqwa Campus addressed young men's challenges through the themes of financial literacy, safety, and mental health, fostering responsible, knowledgeable, and accountable citizenship development.

1.6 Student Well-being Summit

Students from across South Africa and the rest of the continent gathered at the University of the Free State South Campus for the 2025 Global Student Well-Being Summit, engaging over three days in dialogue, learning, and collaboration. Hosted by the HIV and Social Support Offices, the event was attended by delegates from more than 20 higher learning institutions across South Africa and the African continent. The summit was themed *Co-Creating Student Well-being Strategies from the Student's Perspective* and positioned students at the centre of the conversation on well-being in higher education. The summit closed with a clear message: student well-being is not a side programme but is foundational to academic success and meaningful social change. It must be co-created with students, not for them.



1.7 Workshops

1.7.1 The Best Club

The Best Club Meet and Greet fosters community, support, mentoring, and belonging for UFS students living with HIV, enhancing overall well-being.

1.7.2 Treatment Ambassador workshop

The HIV Treatment Ambassador Programme at the University of the Free State (UFS) – under the HIV Clinic – aims to enhance adherence to antiretroviral treatment (ART) and provide psychosocial support to students struggling with accepting their HIV status. This initiative has trained student volunteers as Treatment Ambassadors, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to act as Treatment Buddies to their peers.

1.7.3 Spring fitness Indigenous games

The Indigenous Games event promoted fitness, teamwork, laughter, and cultural appreciation, helping students de-stress through games, singing, dancing, and re-energising before exams.

1.7.4 LGBTQIA+ Dialogue

The BEST Club's LGBTQIA+ dialogue promoted inclusion, respect for identities, empowerment, and diversity across sports, academics, business, and leadership, fostering campus acceptance.

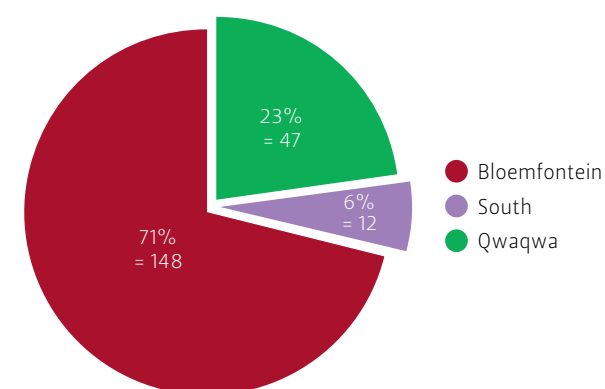
1.7.5 Chatroom (HIV support group) – Throughout the year – 25 sessions

Chatroom sessions provide HIV-positive students and allies with a confidential space to discuss wellness, relationships, stigma, and self-care, fostering peer support, empowerment, resilience, trust, and inclusive community growth within the BEST Club.

1.8 Partnerships, Collaborations and Networking Opportunities

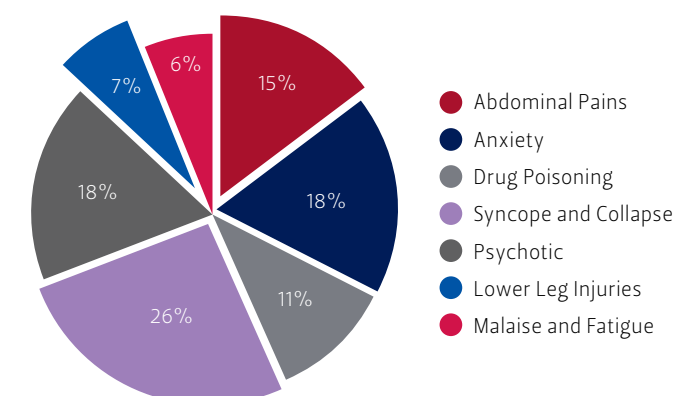
1.8.1 ER24

Total students transported: 207

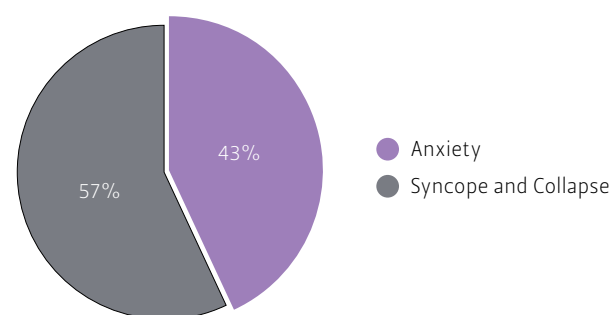


Graph 12: Number of students transported by ER24

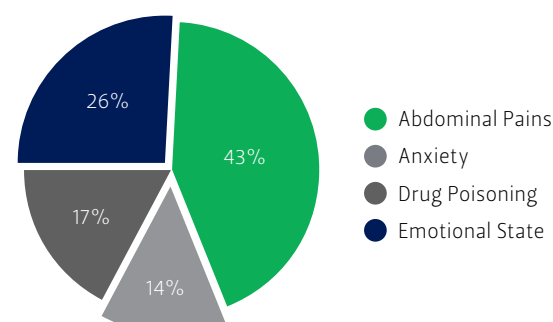
Frequently Used ICD-10 Codes



Graph 13: Frequently used ICD codes: Bloemfontein Campus



Graph 14: Frequently used ICD codes: South Campus



Graph 15: Frequently used ICD codes: Qwaqwa Campus

1.9 Student Profile

The tables below indicate students who visited Kovsie Health in 2025 according to age and gender:

	Age 15 – 24	Age 25+	Gender Male	Gender Female	Gender Other
Bloemfontein Campus	10 539	1 571	1 891	10 002	217
Qwaqwa Campus	6 216	1 042	840	6 398	20
South Campus	1 204	156	190	1 141	29

Table 36: Students who visited the clinic

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

MAHATMA GANDHI

”

2. PILLAR TWO: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Developmental opportunities for staff

The HIV Office conducted Health and Wellness Programme training for staff from the HIV Office, Social Support Office, as well as residence heads on 17 and 18 November 2025. A total of 20 staff members attended the training, including seven from the HIV Office, seven from the Social Support Office, and six residence heads.

During the reporting period, staff actively participated in a range of professional development opportunities aimed at enhancing their knowledge, skills, and service delivery. One staff member completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation Systems, while others completed online training in areas such as Microsoft Excel, event planning, emotional intelligence, business etiquette, and workplace resilience.

Several staff members attended external conferences, including the South African Association of Campus Health Services (SAACHS) conference – with one staff member serving as the Regional Chair of SAACHS – and the Employee Assistance Professionals Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA) Education Week. Internal staff development was widely attended, with seven staff members participating in the Health and Wellness Workshop covering gender diversity, gender-based violence, disability, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/Aids. Six staff members also completed POPIA training. Additional workshops attended included ADHD awareness, internship development, marketing and communication, FemTech AI, qualitative research, and financial literacy (Money Sense), demonstrating the unit's commitment to continuous learning and professional growth.

2.2 Institutional involvement (committees, forums, councils – can also be national or international)

- South African Nursing Council (SANC)
- Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP)
- Employee Assistance Professionals Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA)

3. PILLAR THREE: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

3.1 Communication and Marketing

Marketing and communication are vital for ensuring that the Health and Wellness Centre reaches students wherever they are – on campus, online, and within their daily routines. By utilising a range of communication channels, including posters, social media, email newsletters, QR codes, and face-to-face activations, the centre can capture students' attention in various ways. Since every student interacts with information differently, using a variety of channels improves visibility, raises awareness, and guarantees that crucial health messages and events are seen by a wide range of groups on all campuses. This multi-platform approach makes campaigns more impactful and encourages higher engagement in wellness programmes.

Regardless of the channel, effective communication ensures that messages are clear, relatable, and accessible. The content must be clear and consistent, whether it is presented in an eye-catching poster, a brief reminder on WhatsApp, an extensive email, or a social media post. Reaching students through diverse formats not only extends the audience but also meets students where they feel most comfortable ingesting information. The centre strengthens relationships, encourages behavioural change, and ensures that students remain informed, involved, and supported throughout their journey towards health by integrating a variety of communication techniques.

3.2 Peer Educators – South, Bloemfontein, and Qwaqwa Campuses

Peer Educators play a significant role within the HIV Office by serving as relatable, accessible leaders who bridge the gap between students and wellness services. Because they understand campus life from a student's point of view, they can deliver health information in ways that are genuine, engaging, and culturally relevant. In addition to promoting positive behaviour change among their peers, their presence increases awareness of important topics such as sexual health, mental wellness, substance misuse, and academic help. Peer educators help extend the reach of the HIV Office's programmes across campuses, support early intervention, and create safe spaces where students feel comfortable asking questions and seeking guidance. Through their leadership, the HIV Office helps develop a healthier, more informed, and more connected student community.

3.2.1 Activities

Peer educators play an important role in expanding the HIV Office's work by focusing on vital topics, including the following:

- Gender Diversity
- Sexual and Reproductive Health (HIV/Aids)
- Mental Health
- Gender Diversity and Inclusion
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV)



2025 Peer Educators Qwaqwa Campus



2025 Peer Educators Bloemfontein Campus



2025 Peer Educators South Campus

They support these focus areas through a variety of initiatives, such as campaigns that mobilise the larger student body around important wellness issues, activations that involve students directly on campus through interactive activities and information sharing, and dialogues that foster open discussions and provide safe spaces for students to learn and share.

3.2.2 Dialogues

Dialogues included hosting discussions on gender diversity and inclusivity to promote awareness, understanding, and respect among students, and facilitating small-group discussions on sexual and reproductive health, providing students with a safe space to engage in meaningful conversations and access relevant information. In addition, mental health awareness dialogues were conducted to encourage open discussions about mental health, reduce stigma, and promote help-seeking behaviour and overall well-being.

3.2.3 Activations

Activations included setting up pop-up stalls across campus to raise awareness about HIV/Aids and provide students with relevant information on prevention, testing, and available support services.

It also focused on substance abuse awareness and wellness initiatives, as well as engagement sessions aimed at educating learners about gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and promoting healthy relationships.

In addition, educational materials were distributed during activations to increase awareness of key health and wellness topics, while also promoting access to available support services and resources.

3.2.4 Campaigns

Campaigns included coordinating sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV awareness initiatives, such as condom distribution drives and the promotion of HIV testing services, to encourage informed decision-making and healthy behaviour among students.

Campaign activities also involved assisting with university-wide health and wellness events aimed at promoting holistic student well-being and creating awareness of available support services.

In addition, active participation formed part of all campaigns coordinated by the HIV Office, contributing to the planning, implementation, and promotion of health-related initiatives across the university.



3.2.5 Posters





4. STAFF

The list below depicts the staff complement of KHS during 2025 on the different campuses.

Bloemfontein Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Sr Riana Johnson	Deputy Director: KHS and HIV
Sr Sarien de Necker	Professional Nurse
Sr Corne Vorster	Professional Nurse
Sr Theresa de Vries	Professional Nurse
Sr Refiloe Nyama	Professional Nurse
Emmerencia Sibanda	Enrolled Nurse
Angie Maarman	Office Manager
Shibashiba Moabelo	Programme Coordinator
Xoliswa Matuka	Data Capturer
Mojalefa Rabolinyane	Administrative Assistant
Lerato Selebeli	Receptionist
Ronel Kaars	Receptionist
Lesego Booysen (Agnes)	General Worker
Mmapula Molopyane	HIV Counsellor
Ad hoc Staff	
Godfrey Khiba (Tumi)	HIV Lay Counsellor
Gladys Lemoen	HIV Lay Counsellor
Thandiwe Kato	Admin Assistant

Interns	
Nechia Malebogo	Nombulelo Mphomela
Virginie-Pondela Motolwana	Nthepe Moleke
Kristen van Kradenburg	Mamello Khonze
South Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Sr Sizeni Mabunda	Professional Nurse
Kelibone (Judith) Setai	Receptionist
Qwaqwa Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Sr Mathapelo Moloi	Chief Professional Nurse (interim period)
Sr Matebello Pitso	Chief Professional Nurse
Stanley Mbanjwa	Professional Nurse
Thabiso Mokgehle	Enrolled Nurse
Tebello Mokhethi	Receptionist
Sr Thandiwe Mokoena	Professional Nurse
Sr Masingwaneng Xaba	Professional Nurse
Boitumelo Mokheseng	Data Capturer

Table 37: Kvsie Health Services and HIV Office staff

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to share the highlights of the Health and Wellness Centre's journey over the past year. We remain true to our vision of developing and implementing systemic and holistic health services that promote student well-being and flourishing, while mitigating, reducing, and preventing health and mental health challenges. Please contact the Director should any additional information be needed.

My humanity
is bound up in
yours, for we can
only be human
together.

DESMOND TUTU



